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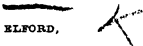
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SAINT ANTHOLIN'S.

St. Antholin's;
OR,
OLD CHURCHES AND NEW.

A Tale for the Times.

BY
FRANCIS E. PAGET, M.A.

RECTOR OF ELFORD,
AND
CHAPLAIN TO THE LORD BISHOP OF OXFORD.

"Touching GOD Himself, hath He any where revealed that it is
His delight to dwell beggarly."—HOOKER'S Eccl. Pol., v. 15.

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TO
THE REV. JOHN RYLE WOOD, M.A.,

CHAPLAIN IN ORDINARY TO THE QUEEN,

AND

DOMESTIC CHAPLAIN TO THE QUEEN DOWAGER,

This Volume is inscribed,

WITH THE DEEPEST FEELINGS OF ESTEEM, AFFECTION,

AND GRATITUDE

FOR INNUMERABLE KINDNESSES,

AND

THE STEDFAST UNVARYING FRIENDSHIP

OF MANY YEARS.

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Advertisement.

IF, (as we have the highest authority for believing,) there be no more forcible, and at the same time less offensive, method of inculcating unwelcome truths, than by leading men to admit certain premises before they are aware that the conclusions apply to themselves, it may be assumed that a tale, like that which occupies the ensuing pages, will not be an improper vehicle

for directing the thoughts of Churchmen to duties, which, in times but recently past, have been (as it should seem), all but universally neglected, and for stimulating them to exertions on a point, wherein immense exertion is every day more and more needed, but wherein the false principles of the day on the one hand, and the false taste of the day on the other, seem likely (if unchecked) to lead them further and further astray than they have gone already.

If other apology be needed for the appearance of this little volume, the Author trusts it may be found in the announcement, that whatever profits may arise from its sale will be devoted to the careful restoration of a beautiful but dilapidated Church,—a church, however, fortunate above many of its fellows in this respect, that its repairs have hitherto been carried on

with a readiness and unanimity, which shews that its Churchwardens and Parishioners are actuated by a spirit diametrically opposite to that which is reprobated in the following pages.

St. Antholin's ;
OR,
OLD CHURCHES AND NEW.

CHAPTER I.

HOW TO PLEASE EVERY BODY.

MR. OLIVER OUZEL was a very good kind of a man : but unless the Fates and the parish of Tadbrook St. Antholin, had conspired together to make him a churchwarden, it is probable that his name would never have descended to posterity. He was just one of those sort of people about whom there is not much to be said either one way or the other. Of moderate means, ordinary abilities, common attainments,—neither tall nor short, fat nor lean, handsome nor ugly, Mr. Ouzel was no way a remarkable

character, nor had any higher pretensions to celebrity than his neighbours; but, for all that, he was a good, plain, honest, respectable man, and for ourselves,—times and circumstances considered,—we do not see how the parish of Tadbroom could have made a better appointment. First, he was a considerable landholder, and therefore he would, for his own sake, keep the rates as low as possible: next, he was a bachelor, and so would have more leisure to look into parish matters; married men have enough to occupy them at home: thirdly, nothing ever put him out of temper, and he had a good-humoured word for everybody, which is a matter of some importance at vestry meetings. So when Mr. Mildways appointed him rector's churchwarden, and then called on the parishioners to nominate a second for themselves, Mr. Woodward, the miller, got up, and said that for his part he saw no reason why Mr. Ouzel should have a coadjutor,—the office was no great trouble,—and their interests were safe in Mr. Ouzel's hands,—he therefore proposed that Mr. Ouzel should be sole churchwarden, elected by the rector and parishioners conjointly. This suggestion

was received with great approbation ; Mr. Ouzel was unanimously elected, and continued in undisturbed possession of his office for five and twenty, or thirty years.

It was very flattering to Mr. Ouzel to be thus appointed ; and his pride was not the less gratified because the same honourable post had been held by his father before him under similar circumstances, for near half a century. But how much soever Mr. Ouzel might be pleased at his exaltation, he was not one of those people who care to shew off their new-blown importance by making sudden and sweeping alterations in the existing order of things. For instance, he did not think it necessary because his predecessor (on coming into office) had painted the Font sky-blue, to have it (on his own accession to dignity) altered to green or yellow : he neither re-gilt the weathercock, nor raised the height of his own pew, nor substituted a white plaister ceiling for a carved oak roof, nor even inserted a tablet in front of the gallery, declaratory of the fact that it was “ Repaired and Beautified, Oliver Ouzel, Churchwarden.” Our hero had no such ambitious schemes:

“his father,” he always said, “was a very sensible man, and he should make it his business to follow his steps exactly in all parochial matters. The church rates had never been more than a half-penny in the pound in his father’s days,—they should not be more in his. The church had lasted very well without repair in his father’s time, and he did not see but it might do the same through his. The church had been whitewashed once in seven years heretofore,—the septennial regulation should be adhered to till the end of the world, or at least so long as he was churchwarden. The parish surplice had only been washed twice a year in old times, and he did not see why Mr. Mildways should want a clean surplice oftener than Dr. Fustiefowl, the last rector.”

Such, and such like, were the principles which guided Mr. Ouzel’s administration of public affairs: and strong in the goodness of his own intentions, and in the respect of his neighbours, the old man regularly as Easter-Monday came round, was to be found in the vestry,—the sole representative of the meeting which he called to inspect his own accounts, and receive his statement of the scores of moles

trapped, and the thousands of sparrows shot or netted,—at two-pence a dozen—within the confines of the parish,—(for by some parental arrangement with which filial duty would not interfere, sparrow-killing had been held to have a legitimate claim on the church-rates.) An hour passed, and no rate-payers attended,—and then Mr. churchwarden Ouzel, with a gentle sigh, made a memorandum of the fact,—gathered up his outspread papers,—tied them up, sighed once more, slowly walked out of the vestry,—put on his hat, and we suppose voted himself into office for the ensuing year,—for nobody seemed to think it possible that any one but “Muster Ouzel” *could* be churchwarden, or that any one could administer the office more efficiently.

Such, we say, were Mr. Ouzel’s principles, and if the reader has smiled at the development of them, let him remember that there was nothing in them absurd or ridiculous. They were *right* principles. It is *true* wisdom to adhere to the system adopted by our predecessors till some sound reason can be shewn for relinquishing them. It is truer wisdom to follow the steps of those who have gone before, and

be guided by their prejudices, than to make changes for the mere love of change, or because innovation happens to be the fashion. It argues ill for a man's head and heart when he allows himself to think that those whom he succeeds had no reason for what they did, and that sound judgment never was exercised till his own day.

There are many Oliver Ouzels in the world: but none of them are ridiculous till after opportunities having been afforded them of knowing why ancient opinions should be discarded, they nevertheless retain them, not out of conviction, but obstinacy.

Having made this remark, our duty as faithful chroniclers compels us to confess that the next passage in Mr. Ouzel's public life, *did* make him ridiculous.

It happened at the time to which we allude, that the Archdeacon of the diocese in which the parish of Tadbrook St. Antholin was situated, and who had for many years been in an infirm state of health, and unable to make a personal inspection of the churches under his charge, died, and was succeeded by a gentleman of great zeal and activity.

“I have called on you this morning,” said Mr. Mildways to Mr. Ouzel, a few months after this new appointment, “for the purpose of announcing to you that I have had a note from Archdeacon Sharpe, in which he tells me that he proposes visiting our church next Thursday.”

“Visit our church?” cried Mr. Ouzel rather tartly, “What does he want to visit our church for?”

“My good Sir, it is part of the archdeacon’s duty to see that the fabric is in good repair, and that all things belonging to it are kept decently and in order.”

“The church is well enough,” said Mr. Ouzel, in a tone quite unusual to him, and with the feeling of jealousy which, after so many years of unquestioned supremacy, the prospect of external interference not unnaturally produced. “The church is well enough,” he repeated; “the old archdeacon I remember, told my father we were quite a pattern for neatness,—he happened to call just after the white-washing.”

“Ah, my good friend,” said Mr. Mildways, “but you forget how time flies: you and I were young men then.”

“Well, Sir, now I come to think, it must have been near forty years ago: but I don’t see much difference since then: the church is well enough.”

“I hope the archdeacon will think so,” replied Mr. Mildways.

There was something in this answer which Mr. Ouzel did not like. In the first place, he had very vague notions about an archdeacon’s authority; only he felt that such an officer must needs be meddling and disagreeable,—that chapels

———“and churches,
To him were geese and turkies;”

that he was, in short, a sort of ecclesiastical Dragon of Wantley, with an insatiable appetite for brick and mortar, traversing the country at will, overwhelming parishes with expense and churchwardens with trouble. And in the next place, a dim vision passed over Mr. Ouzel’s mind, in which he fancied a stern man in a shovel hat, charging him to whitewash the church every three years instead of every seven, out of the mere capriciousness of arbitrary power. However, recovering his usual good humoured manner, he shaped his answer as follows:—“Well, Sir, I

hope Dr. Sharpe will be satisfied. I can set Betty Giles to weed the walks, and give the church a sweeping, and the pews a dusting; it is but a day's work, and I'm sure the parish wont grudge it on such an occasion,—indeed I will cheerfully do it out of my own pocket, if you think that proper, Mr. Mildways."

Mr. Mildways shook his head, and said, "I suspect the archdeacon will hardly let us off so easily. What do you think he will say about the spire?"

"Dear me, why what *can* he say about it, but that it was a bad misfortune that the lightning struck it. He can't expect to see a spire that is five, or six, or ~~may~~ be seven hundred years old looking as new as if John Hodd had just built it: and I'm sure we take all proper care to prevent accidents; I never allow the boys to go into the belfry now to take the jackdaws' nests;—and the bells have not been rung these five years."

"But suppose the archdeacon desires you to pull down the steeple, and rebuild it, what is to be done then?"

Mr. Ouzel looked as if he thought his senses were

leaving him: such a notion had never before crossed his mind as possible,—and he really gasped for breath, as he exclaimed,

“Rebuild the spire! did you say, Sir? I am getting deaf you know,—the *spire*, Sir?”—Mr. Mildways nodded assent.

“Rebuild this spire? *any* spire? why the thing’s impossible: the art has been lost for centuries. Not a mason or a builder in England who could undertake such a job:—and then the cost: the *cost*, Sir: why who’s to pay for it? Why, Sir, a hundred half-penny levies wo’nt do it.”

In due time Thursday came, and with it the dreaded archdeacon: a kind, simple-hearted man, with an affable, conciliating manner, and a most amiable expression of countenance. Mr. Ouzel had called at the rectory in his way to the church, as Mr. Mildways had expressed his intention of accompanying him: but a fit of the gout had rendered that impossible, so Mr. Ouzel was left to face the enemy alone. On entering the church-yard, he looked round him, and congratulated himself on be-

ing first in the field, as his visit at the rectory had caused a delay of some minutes, and he was rather behind his time. So he sat upon a tombstone and whistled;—but he was out of tune.

“Good morning, Sir,” said a voice over his head. Mr. Ouzel looked up, and there stood the archdeacon between the embrasures of the battlements on the roof of the nave. Mr. Ouzel was infinitely too much startled to reply: and before he could frame his answer the archdeacon was at his side.

“I am very sorry I have kept you waiting, Sir,” stammered forth the surprised churchwarden.

“Oh, pray make no apologies,—(Mr. Ouzel I presume?) Mr. Ouzel, I believe I may be rather early; but I have a hard day’s work before me, and therefore I have done what I could in the way of inspection before your arrival: fortunately I saw a man with a ladder, and was able to get upon the leads, which I am glad to see are in very tolerable repair. Fine old church indeed; extraordinarily beautiful the pattern of these windows: all of them I believe in what is called the decorated style. All but one, I see: I wonder why that has been so mutilated.”

“Why that window, Mr. Archdeacon, was bricked up at the request of Mrs. Clutterbuck, our squire’s wife. She found the light too strong for her eyes, and she thought the stove pipe might as well be carried out through that aperture as through any other.”

“I think the arrangement very objectionable,” said the archdeacon, “and I should advise your restoring the window to its original condition.”

“I am afraid Mrs. Clutterbuck will be very much offended: and I should be very sorry to give offence: very fascinating lady, Sir, I assure you.”

“You had better throw the blame upon my shoulders. Say the archdeacon ordered it.” They had now entered the church. The archdeacon made his careful but rapid survey;—roof, walls, windows, doors, each in turn were submitted to his scrutiny. “Ah!” said he, as he looked at the window which had been blocked up, this is a much worse business than I thought,—not only an ugly thing, but makes this part of the church quite dark: and, and . . . why what in the world is this, Mr. Ouzel?

“This, Sir, is Mrs. Clutterbuck’s pew.”

“Pew!” exclaimed Dr. Sharpe, “I thought it

was her *bed*. Why it is all curtains and pillows. Take care, if you please, Mr. Churchwarden, that no pews are built in this fashion for the time to come. Churches are houses of prayer,—not bed-chambers.”

“Well, Mr. Ouzel,” continued the archdeacon after a pause, “your church is very neat and clean—but as a matter of taste, do let me recommend you to dispense with this whitewash.”

“Sir,” groaned forth the churchwarden, “it has always been whitewashed: never was otherwise in the memory of the oldest inhabitant.”

“Very probably,” said the archdeacon, “but if you will just look here....there,” he continued, after removing with a clasp-knife a flake, half an inch thick, of successive coats of whitewash,—“there, you see what a beautiful coloured fine-grained stone, we arrive at beneath. Caen stone, I do believe,—yes, certainly Caen stone. Depend upon it, Mr. Ouzel, those who built this church, and were at all the trouble and cost of importing their stone from France, never dreamed that their successors would disfigure it with whitewash. And just ob-

serve here how it clogs up the carved work, and how sharp the foliage comes out when the lime is got rid of."

Mr. Ouzel could not but see it: but in the true spirit of John Bull, he thought in his heart that he liked good honest English whitewash, better than Frenchified stone. The archdeacon saw that he had an unwilling auditor, and dropped the subject, for there were more important matters to be attended to.

"I fear," said he, as he completed his survey, "that both the south and east walls are in a dilapidated state, and some of the main beams of the roof appear to have sunk considerably; both must be attended to immediately. But unless I am mistaken, there is a matter of still greater consequence,—the spire: it seems to be quite ruinous at the top, and very much out of the perpendicular. Is not this the case?"

"It was struck by lightning some years since."

"Pray have you more than one bell?"—"Five," answered Mr. Ouzel.—"And can you ring them?"

"We have not done so lately, for fear the vibration should bring the steeple down."

This admission was quite enough for Dr. Sharpe : he begged to be admitted into the belfry. Mr. Ouzel opened the door, and the archdeacon immediately began to mount the rude oak ladder, the rounds of which were about two feet apart. Mr. Ouzel was not in the habit of going up ladders, but he felt himself in no condition to refuse, and he was proceeding leisurely, and had mounted about half way, when the archdeacon lifting up the trap-door which gave admission to the bell-chamber, down came upon the heads of both, a cloud of sticks, and feathers, and straw, and dust,—the remains of the last five years jackdaws' nests. For a moment they were almost blinded, and Mr. Ouzel in his alarm began to think that the steeple was coming down, and had he known how, he would have made a precipitate retreat.

“Indeed, Sir, you had better come down,” he cried in a voice both deprecatory and supplicatory. But the archdeacon had scrambled through the trap door, and was on his legs on the floor above. “No, no, my friend,” cried he, looking down good naturedly, “nobody is fit for my office, who does not examine with his own eyes : but while I look about

me here, do you wait for me below. I am younger than you are, and more used to such work."

"He will certainly break his neck," was Mr. Ouzel's first thought. "It will save us a great expense perhaps if he does," was his second. "Still, I had rather not see the accident happen," was his third: and thereupon Mr. Ouzel walked into the churchyard, to await the catastrophe. However, the archdeacon soon joined him safe and sound, and Mr. Ouzel was heartily glad to see him once more on terra firma, though he tried to persuade himself of the contrary.

"It appears to me," said Dr. Sharpe, "that if you do not make haste, the steeple will fall of itself: it must, I am quite sure, be taken down immediately: indeed, I would recommend you to have an experienced builder's opinion without loss of time, as to whether it is even safe to celebrate divine service. You shall hear from me in a day or two. I will send you a statement of the repairs which I deem necessary, and as you have all the summer before you, I shall hope to hear that the greater part of the work will be done this year." So saying he got

into his carriage and drove off, leaving Mr. Ouzel very much in the condition of one who is uncertain whether he is asleep or awake.

However the reality of what had taken place could not be doubted, and the indignant churchwarden's breast heaved with emotion as he thought of all the unwarrantable interference (as he deemed it) which had been exercised with regard to his prerogative. For a while he pursued his way home in silence, but by and by his pent up wrath vented itself in words, and flourishing the church key, which he had carried off instead of his walking-stick, he exclaimed—"Steeple!—window!—whitewash!—pew!—bed!—Clutterbuck!—why we might as well pull down the church at once, as make all these changes! Set him up indeed! I wonder what makes him think that all the world is to be at his beck and bidding. If he's archdeacon, I'll let him know that I am churchwarden of Tadbrook St. Antholin. He may order what he pleases, but we'll see who he gets to obey him!"

And Mr. Churchwarden Ouzel vowed a vow to set the archdeacon at defiance, and to go his own

way, and repair the church as much or as little as he pleased. And for a time he succeeded in his intention : he continued to make delays and excuses, and to thwart or oppose everything which he was enjoined to do. Under the plea of resisting unjustifiable interference, and saving the parish a heavy expense, he made himself as silly and troublesome as possible.

But what cared he? He was complimented by Mrs. Clutterbuck, and applauded by the rate-payers, till he was at last thoroughly satisfied that if not the greatest *man*, he was at least the greatest churchwarden that ever lived.

CHAPTER II.

HOW TO PLEASE NOBODY.

By the end of two years after the scene recorded in the last chapter, greater changes had occurred in Tadbrook than those which Mr. Ouzel had resisted. The church spire (though sorely out of the perpendicular) was still standing,—but Mr. Ouzel himself was lying in his narrow bed in the church-yard. Good old Mr. Mildways too, had followed his neighbour to the grave. A new order of things had commenced: there was a new rector, Mr. Sanderson, and two new churchwardens;—for Mr. Sanderson, when he nominated his own, had recommended the parishioners to elect some other person to watch

over their interests. Such a plan, he said, was fairest by all parties when there was the prospect of inevitable expense before them ; it would save disputes, and divide the responsibility.

The farmers (for St. Antholin's is an agricultural parish) were not much pleased with the positive way in which Mr. Sanderson talked of inevitable expense, but thought his advice good, and followed it. There was great talk of electing Mr. Kettlewell ; but as it was known that his temper was rather hasty, it was feared that he might (to use a common expression) "get into hot water ;" so the public choice fell eventually on Mr. Walter Tyler, the corn-factor.

Mr. Tyler was certainly not quite the sort of man for the office, for it often happened that he was not at church for months together,—he was obliged to make up his weekly accounts on the Sunday, he said ; or he had a particular engagement, or he had a letter to write. He was one of those persons, in short, who have always an excellent reason (in *their* view of the matter) for breaking the fourth commandment. On the other hand, Mr. Andrewes, his brother churchwarden, was a pious, consistent churchman,

regular in his attendance on all the church's ordinances, and one who took some interest in the venerable fabric which was committed to his trust. In conjunction with Mr. Sanderson he made a careful survey of the condition of the entire pile; and being thoroughly satisfied that in some parts it was in a ruinous,—in others in an absolutely dangerous state, he urged on his colleague the necessity of calling in forthwith some experienced builder to make proper estimates and specifications of the needful repairs. Mr. Tyler told his companion in office that he was an alarmist; that he always made the worst of things; that when once people begin with repairs there was no end to them, and so forth; that is to say, he tried, like Mr. Ouzel, to put off the evil day.

It fortunately happened, however, that Walter Tyler had felt the inconsistency of a man holding the office of churchwarden who never went to church; and he was now seen there regularly once on the Sunday. A week or two after he had resisted Mr. Andrewes's suggestion, while sitting in his pew, a piece of plaster from the ceiling above gave way,

and fell upon his head. It has often happened that such an incident has caused a congregation to rise up simultaneously and rush out of church, crushing and trampling one another to death. But the good folks of St. Antholin's were either more apathetic than their neighbours, or more used to the symptoms of decay in their church. Every body looked up, but nobody moved,—nobody, with the exception of Mr. Tyler, whose equanimity was considerably disturbed. *He* had visited Tadbroke church too rarely, to have become familiarized to the notion of sitting under a roof the beams of which were giving way: and though theoretically he was disposed to argue that what had lasted three hundred years might last three hundred years more, yet when it came to the practical question whether or no he should himself be the victim of the experiment, he seemed disposed to view the matter in a different light. At any rate, he moved pretty rapidly from where he was sitting,—unfastened the pew door that he might be ready for a start,—and fixed his eyes on the suspected ceiling, while he endured what seemed to him the longest sermon that ever fell from a preacher's lips.

But Mr. Tyler's anxiety did not stop here ; for no sooner was church over, than he joined his colleague Andrewes, and assured him that he had entirely come over to his way of thinking, and desired that Scantlings, the builder, should be consulted immediately. As Mr. Andrewes had seen the fall of plaster, and the effect which it produced on his friend's countenance, he was fully able to appreciate the disinterested motive which inspired him : however, he was too discreet to betray himself. No time was lost,—Mr. Scantlings was sent for, a survey made, estimates prepared, and a vestry called for the purpose of receiving them : they amounted to £700.

“ Gentlemen,” said Mr. Sanderson, on taking the chair, “ the subject which we are met here to consider is not altogether new to you ; for I understand that in the time of my lamented predecessor, the archdeacon had required certain repairs to be made which were then deemed necessary. The delay,—from whatever cause arising,—has been peculiarly unfortunate, as I am assured by Mr. Scantlings that £300 would have *then* sufficed to do, what I fear will now cost more than double that sum.”

“We ought to have somebody’s word besides Scantlings’: he’s a builder, and wants to fill his own pockets.” This was said by a dirty looking man with his arms akimbo, who was standing at the bottom of the room, and had evidently a great deal to say on the subject. It was Tapps, the drunken shoemaker, who lived by the church-gate,—though, except on the present occasion, he had not been seen within the walls of the church for years.

“Of course,” replied Mr. Sanderson, “if the parishioners like to call in another opinion, they have full power to do so: it will be an additional expense,—but that is a point for their consideration. If, however, you will allow me to finish what I was saying, you can make your objections afterwards; but interruptions, Mr. Tapps, are inconvenient. The matter which I would press upon your consideration is this. By the munificence of those who preceded us, we have the blessing of a church wherein we may worship God, hear His word, receive His sacraments,—a blessing which, (let me say in passing,) very many thousands of our fellow-countrymen are, I fear, without. If you look round this venerable

pile, you will see that they who reared it grudged nothing which could insure its stability, nothing which could make it a worthy offering to God, nothing which could give it beauty and solemnity in the eyes of man. This is what our predecessors have done for us: and the question is, whether *we* shall *repair* what *they* so nobly built; whether, since *they* did so much for *us*, it is not our bounden duty to transmit their gift uninjured to posterity."

"Posterity has done nothing for me," exclaimed Tapps, guarding his pockets; "why should I do anything for posterity?"

"Because we should do by others, as we would have them do by us;—because, Mr. Tapps, you have a debt to pay." Tapps coloured, and was silent, for he had many debts to pay, and very little to pay them withal: he was silent, but quite in the dark as to the connection between his debts and posterity.

"Perhaps, gentlemen, it may be too much to expect that you should restore this house of God to the condition in which it existed in a better age: but the law requires that the fabric should be kept

in sound repair: and I beg to say, that if you will restore what is *essential*, I will cheerfully devote £100 to ornamental repairs. I am anxious to go with you hand in hand, and to shew you that I feel it to be both a privilege and a pleasure to be permitted to contribute to such an object."

There was a buzz of approbation at the last sentence. Mr. Tyler said it was "very handsome;" and Mr. Tomkins, that "the parish ought to be much obliged to Mr. Sanderson." Tapps muttered in an under tone, "Well, if he thinks it a privilege and a pleasure, I wonder why he don't take it all on his own shoulders. He shall have my share of the church-rate, and welcome."

"I heartily wish I *could* take it on my own shoulders," said Mr. Sanderson, as he heard the ungracious speech; "if my means allowed it, I should esteem it the very highest privilege that could be conferred on me to be allowed to restore the walls and repair the breaches in this house of prayer. *I would build as an act of worship.* But the estimated expense of the needful repairs amounts to exactly twice as much as my yearly income: and you must

know that I have other claims upon me which must not be neglected."

When Mr. Sanderson had done speaking, there followed a long silence. It was evident that the parishioners had no inclination to incur so heavy an expense, and yet nobody knew exactly how it was to be escaped.

"I really don't see, Sir," said Walter Tyler at length, addressing himself to the rector; "I don't see how such a sum is ever to be raised."

"I do not think it need all be raised at once," replied Mr. Sanderson; "the builder intimates that the spire and part of the roof are the points which require most immediate attention. The work may be done gradually; or if you prefer doing the whole at once, the law will allow you to borrow money on the credit of the church-rates; so that by paying off a certain portion of the principal and interest annually, the burden will not be severely felt by you: it will be spread over a given number of years."

"Don't you think some nice light cast-iron pillars would do very well to support the roof?" asked John Crabley, the overseer, whose brother had a share in a neighbouring foundry.

“I think the fairest thing would be that every body should repair that part of the roof which is over his own seat,” observed a rate-payer who had a very small pew.

“For my part,” said another, “I don’t see that things are worse than they were a year ago.” Mr. Tyler shook his head, for he thought of the plaster. “At any rate, I think the roof or the walls, or whatever is amiss, might be shored up, so as to make all safe for a while longer.”

“I fear,” said Mr. Sanderson, who sat patiently listening to all this nonsense, in the hope that it would bring its own condemnation with it in the minds of the more respectable part of his parishioners, who were sitting silent and undecided; “I fear that all these suggestions will only palliate the evil, not remove it:” and then, feeling that he had to deal with persons who (alas! for the low, cold, covetous temper of the age!) could only be worked upon by pecuniary considerations, he added—“there is one point which you will do well to consider: the repairs will *now* cost £700; if experience is to be our guide in such matters, a few years hence (if the edifice

stands so long) the expense may increase to £1,400 or £1,500."

"Aye, but it will last *our* time, I reckon, and the young uns may look arter themselves," said Cobbler Tapps, with a wink and a shrug which he intended should be very convincing. "By your leave, gentlemen, I'll tell you how it is. I am a man, gentlemen, that don't noways like to part with my money without just cause and impediment: and so as I am a rate-payer, I should just like to ax a question or two. Pray, Mr. Churchwarden Andrewes, what business has that Dr. Sharpe to come here meddling about our church? if it hadn't been for him, nobody would ha' seed that there war anything amiss in it."

"Why, Tapps, you know well enough: he's the archdeacon: and it is his business to see that all parts of the church are in repair,— walls, windows, pillars, arches, and so forth."

"Oh that's the reason is it, that he's called an *arch*deacon? Well but suppose he orders one thing, and we do another?"

"Why then, Tapps, he may bring us into all manner of trouble."

“Bring a fool’s head into trouble,” cried Tapps growing eloquent.—“I’ll tell you how it is, gentlemen; if poor Muster Ouzel war’nt in his grave we should’nt have heard nothing of all this rigmarole. To be sure, by all accounts, he gave your archdeacon as good as he brought: he know’d his business, and war’nt going to let poor folks be imposed upon. Yes, gentlemen, he was a good man,—and a great man, gentlemen,—worthy to be admired, gentlemen; and imitated, gentlemen: and I wish with all my heart we had a spice of his equanimity and jurisprudence. Sure, gentlemen, if there is one thing more than another which is the birthright of Englishmen, it is civil and religious liberty: see how that there man tramples on our rights! pretty *religious* liberty we should have if we can’t do what we will with our own church! and for *civil*, I’m sure there’s as little civility as need be, on *his* part, at least! And so, gentlemen, I shall move that we put off receiving them there estimates for six months in order to give us time to look about us, and see if we can’t agree among ourselves what’s best to be done, without archdeacons or any such cattle:—no offence to his

reverence, Mr. Sanderson. Crabley will you second me?"

Crabley (the only dissenter in the parish, and a rate payer to the amount of twopence halfpenny per annum,) nodded.

"Gentlemen, I move this meeting be adjourned from this present day, the 7th of January, 1839, to the 7th of July, next."

It was evident that the wealthier rate-payers, who had taken no part in the preceding discussion, were not sorry to have the odium of originating such a proposition shifted from their own shoulders; but they were not ashamed to support it. One or two murmurs of assent were followed by a general expression of opinion, that after all they would be no harm in a little delay,—that Tapps had made a very fair suggestion; and that it was better to have a little time to look about them, and not take a leap in the dark.

The question was then put by Mr. Sanderson, and to his no small regret, was carried by an overwhelming majority; in fact, Churchwarden Andrewes and himself were the only persons to vote against it.—Mr. Walter Tyler was neutral.

It is one of the many evils arising from the absence of anything like a systematic course of clerical education in this country, that perhaps not one clergyman in a hundred enters his profession with the slightest knowledge of Ecclesiastical Law. I am far from saying that the standard of qualification for holy orders has not been raised of late years; and the probable consequence of the increased strictness of episcopal examination will be, that, before long, some plan will be devised by which those who desire to enter the sacred profession, will have earlier opportunities of being properly trained for it. At present, there are not many young men, perhaps, who commence a course of theological study till within two or three years before their ordination. They have, no doubt, (in spite of the sneers of cavillers) gained at school and college a great deal more than either "much mythologic stuff," or "the art of making nonsense-verses;" they have been taught to think and write; they have gained the rudiments of sound religion, and sound scholarship: but they have done little or nothing with the express view of becoming candidates for the ministry of the Church of

England. Of Hebrew many know little or nothing ;—of the history of the Catholic Church, too often nothing ;—of the writings of the Fathers, nothing ;—of Liturgies and Rituals, nothing ;—of controversial divinity, and the questions at issue between ourselves and the Dissenters and Romanists, nothing, or next to nothing. . And if a certain amount of knowledge on all these points, is to be acquired in two or three years—(and, be it remembered, that that brief space may be all which the overburdened clergy of our populous parishes can secure of quiet study *during their whole lives*)—how can it be wondered at, that many enter the church in absolute ignorance with respect to many points of (inferior certainly, but yet of) considerable importance ; such a knowledge, for instance, of ecclesiastical architecture as might have some effect in controlling that far worse enemy of our venerable churches, than time or weather,—churchwarden's taste ; such a knowledge of music as might make our village choirs the reverse of what they are ; or such a knowledge of ecclesiastical law, as might at least serve for the regulation of a vestry.

If the rector of St. Antholin's had possessed the

latter qualification, he would have been aware of what the archdeacon subsequently informed him, namely, that he ought not to have put the question proposed by Tapps to the vote at all,—he should have met it with a prompt and decided negative, and explained that adjournments of a vestry meeting for the purpose of getting rid of a question are not binding, that they cannot deprive the parishioners of their right to meet in vestry, and on the same subject, whenever they are summoned by the churchwardens.

But Mr. Sanderson was a very young man, and though full of anxiety to do right, had as yet but little experience, and his churchwarden, Andrewes, was unable to help him; for hitherto, as we have seen, matters had been conducted so quietly at Tadbrook, that the parishioners seemed to be,—one and all,—unversed in the rules and regulations of vestries.

When the party which had assembled broke up, the rector and his churchwarden,—companions in defeat, returned homewards together. Mr. Andrewes was the first that spoke, and he inveighed with considerable severity against the short sighted folly of his neighbours;—"but we owe it all," he continued,

“to Oliver Ouzel’s obstinacy: and I wish with all my heart he had lived a year longer that he might have seen what a scrape he has got us into. If instead of making his boast that the church had never cost the parish above ten pounds a year for his own life time and his father’s, he had been above such petty vanity, and the love of present popularity, and had gone on repairing gradually, and at a proper outlay from time to time, the edifice would be at this moment in decent condition, and we should have no disunion among neighbours. Some folks thought him the best churchwarden that ever lived; —I am sure I think him the worst.”

“He took the low, popular view of the duties which devolved on him,” replied Mr. Sanderson, “and even these he discharged inefficiently; for he made the very common mistake of being ‘penny wise, and pound foolish.’ Luckily for himself, however, he contrived to get all the credit of his ‘penny wisdom,’ while he has bequeathed us the legacy of his ‘pound folly.’ However, we must not lose our tempers because we are defeated. We must use the time before us in trying to bring over our neigh-

bours to our own views. Much may be done in six months, and I hope that in so short a time no great increase of dilapidation will take place. It is really very fortunate we have had so few storms this winter. To-day is as high a wind as we have had, but the old spire seems to stand it bravely."

"Winter is come, Sir, but not gone: and as for the spire, Scantlings says it may come down any day, wind or no wind;—and if you will allow me to contradict you, Sir, I think if you will stand where I do,—thus, Sir,—yes a little more to the right,—you will see that the staff of the weathercock vibrates considerably: if the wind was to go on rising instead of lulling as it seems disposed to do, I think there would be mason's work to be done before morning."

"No, no, my good friend," said Mr. Sanderson laughing, "you see the clouds drifting rapidly past the weathercock, and that deceives your eye. But to return to a point which is of the greatest importance to the future comfort of us all, take the greatest care not to shew any vexation, or to use any hasty words about what has taken place to-day. I think our neighbours are in error, but I would

fain believe that their motives are as pure as our own. And if any *have* acted an unworthy part as churchmen, let us remember how much there is in the spirit of the times to mislead them. It is not now as in the days of old, when the people "willingly offered" of their substance to God: covetousness and luxury have eaten into the very core of this generation: our views are low: our faith is cold: the ancient feelings of reverence and awe with respect to holy things are laughed at: the spirituality of religion is held to depend upon its cheapness: schism is looked upon as no sin: church principles are forgotten, or ridiculed. What wonder then if such sentiments as we have heard broached to-day are common, and the people fail to remember to whom their duty and allegiance is due? Therefore we must make allowance for them,—must lead them gently,—argue with them kindly,—we must be wise as serpents,—discreet and sober minded,—unflinching and consistent. We may then have good hope of bringing them back to sound church principles,—and when, by God's great mercy, that is done, all the rest will follow as a matter of course."

CHAPTER III.

WHO WOULD HAVE THOUGHT IT?

THERE is hardly, perhaps, a single church in this country erected previously to the times of the great Rebellion, which does not contain about it some features of interest or beauty. The wasting hand of time may have robbed the mouldering stones of their sharpness,—puritanical violence may have hewn down the carved work with axes and hammers,—modern innovations may have disfigured its fair proportions, with galleries, and pews, and curtains, and towering pulpits;—there may be dirt, and damp, and mildew, and decay, and all the combined abominations which contribute alas ! in not a few instances to

make our houses of prayer a shame and reproach to us,—but there is, probably, not one which will not repay the trouble of a visit, which will not bring deep, holy, thankful thoughts into the dutiful churchman's breast.

“Time cannot make such waste, but something will appeare,
To shew some little tract of delicacie there;
Or some religious worke, in building manie a day,
That this penurious age hath suffred to decay,
Some limb or model drag'd out of the ruinous mass,
The richness will declare in glorie whilst it was.”*

Something there will be in the fretted roof above,—some name on the pavement beneath his feet;—some form of arch, or aisle, or screen, or canopy;—some circumstance connected with font or altar;—some effect of light and shade;—some feature of beauty or desolation, which will lead the thoughtful Christian back to better times, transport him from the visible to the invisible world, and bring him, as it were, into closer communion with those whom we are continually tempted to forget.

The claims of Tadbroke church, however, as an object of general interest, were in all respects considerable. As a whole, it was an almost perfect

* Drayton's Polyolbion. First Song.

specimen of the decorated style, having (so far as the exterior was concerned) been subject to little or no alteration since the fourteenth century, in which it was originally erected. The beauty of its proportions, the colour of the stone, with which it was built,—the lightness and elegance of its lofty spire,—the foliated tracery of the windows,—the flowered mouldings, and the parapet pierced with trefoils, (like that, which we believe still surmounts the tower of St. Mary's at Oxford, and once surrounded the entire building,*) were details which, taken separately, would be sure to attract the eye of taste,—and which, collectively, rendered the edifice well worth the careful study of any lover of Gothic architecture.

Within, the usual mutilations and disfigurements which deform our churches were to be seen,

* Or at any rate the North side. It is impossible to compare any of the older engravings (that in Peshall's History of Oxford, for instance) with the more recent views of St. Mary's, without observing what a grievous loss to the general appearance and even proportions of the church has been caused by the removal of these parapets. If ever the Oxford Architectural Society should follow the plan adopted by its sister institution at Cambridge, and devote a portion of its funds to the work of restoration, it could hardly exercise its munificence on a building more loved and honoured than the University Church, or with more obvious advantage than with respect to the parapets alluded to.

pews of all shapes and sizes, a heavy carved altar piece and pulpit in the barbarous taste of Charles the Second's reign, and the never-failing accompaniments of plaster and whitewash, in addition to the general state of dilapidation already alluded to. But there was still the font of exquisite design, with its lofty canopy, rising in a succession of arches, buttresses, and pinnacles, and terminated by a florid finial,—there was the carved oak screen,—a few misereres in the chancel,—some vestiges of painted glass,—but above all there were the beautifully-proportioned pillars of the nave,—

“The pillars with clustered shafts so trim,
With base and capital flourished around,
Like bundles of lances with garlands bound.”

Such was the church, which churchmen, its appointed guardians, were leaving to decay and ruin!

It was on the evening of the day of the vestry-meeting that Mrs. Tapps, the wife of the orator of the morning, was sitting by her solitary fire, full of sad thoughts, and listening to the wind as it howled in the large old-fashioned chimney. She was a respectable, kind-hearted woman, with an education

rather above her rank in life,—but had committed one capital error, which had embittered all her subsequent existence,—she had quitted a comfortable situation to marry Tapps, who, after he had succeeded in getting possession of her hard-earned savings, had neglected her, and often in his drunkenness treated her and his children with brutality. Her domestic existence therefore was a miserable one, and the death of children and other sorrows had given her countenance an expression of deep melancholy: she was, however, both patient and resigned, and strove to do her daily duties, and perform her difficult part with diligence and faithfulness.

She was nursing by the fire side, and one painful reflection had succeeded another till at length the tears began to roll down her cheeks. “No, no,” said she to herself, as she felt them dropping on her hand, “this will never do. I must not give way to this folly,” and she rose up to employ herself on some household matter. As she crossed the room, she heard some one attempting to open the door;—her heart beat for she supposed it was her husband returning drunk as usual from the public house,

and she always trembled at the thoughts of his violence, but she was soon relieved for the latch was raised, and as a violent eddy of wind dashed the door back upon its hinges and almost extinguished the candle, she recognized her own brother—Robert Spellman, the village schoolmaster,—in youth the pride and joy of her heart, and now the chief consolation of her worse than widowed age.

He was a frail, sickly looking man, for the confinement and drudgery of his wearisome profession had made his cheeks pale and flushed alternately, had compressed his lips, and sunk his eye, and made his hand to tremble, and his head to throb.

“Well a day, Robin, is that you? Who’d have thought to have seen you here at this time of night? What has carried you this way?”

“The wind, I believe, Mary,” replied the schoolmaster, who in his own quiet way, was something of a humourist,—“at least I know my own will and my legs had very little to do with it. I have been to the rectory to speak to Mr. Sanderson about the children’s copy books,—and I was on my way home; but really the wind is so strong, and buffeted me

about so, who am but weakly, that I thought I would turn out of my way, and just rest me here for a while."

"Sit you down, and get your breath, Robin, and you shall have a cup of tea. What for, I wonder, could you venture out on such a night, you poor old creachy creature, you?" And Mary smiled with pleasure on the dearly-loved face before her.

"Why the wind was not so high when I set out, and I had to wait at the rectory above an hour, Mr. Sanderson was so busy with Mr. Andrewes.—The oak tree on the left of the hatch-gate was blown down while I was at the rectory. It was standing when I passed it in my way there, but when I came back it was lying across the road, shivered all to pieces. I was quite glad when I got out of the avenue, for the boughs were crashing right and left in all directions. There hasn't been such a gale since farmer Dobb's stack of chimnies came down.—Well, Mary, and how's Bill?"

Mrs. Tapps shook her head.

"What at his old tricks? Down at the Leg of Mutton I suppose?"

"I suppose so," said Mrs. Tapps, with a sigh, "my poor husband will hardly keep away from his liquor, when he can find an excuse for going to it: and he's quite above himself to day with having out-voted Mr. Sanderson."

"He ought to have been ashamed of himself,"—replied Robert Spellman, and then remembering that his words might probably pain his sister, he changed the subject, and inquired whether she had seen her daughter Lucy within the last few days.

"O yes; Miss Mildways thought her something better, and so she sent for me to come up to Hazlebank yesterday afternoon."

"What a kind old lady that is!"

"Kind, Robert? you may well say that: what could she do more for my daughter, if she had been her own?"

"Well, and how did you find Lucy?"

"Poor dear, she said she had less pain in her back than she had when she was here, but I don't see much amendment."

"Why you know, Mary, that in all these spine cases the recovery must be very gradual. Her ill-

ness was along while coming on, and, may be, it will be a long while before she is cured."

"My mind misgives me, Robert," said the poor mother, while the tears rose in her eyes once more, "that cured she will never be: but this I know full well,—if she does not recover her health, it will not be for want of kind nursing. Dear, dear, to see how Miss Mildways (that is so far advanced in years and such an invalid herself) has contrived and schemed every thing for Lucy's comfort. Such a comfortable couch, she lies upon, poor child, in the housekeeper's room, with her little table by her side, and her book, and her work, or whatever she can do to amuse herself, or make herself useful, for Miss Mildways knows she can't abide being idle. I did what I could for her here, but there was too much noise and racket for her; and Miss Mildways saw that, for she said she must have her at Hazle-bank, in order to keep her quiet."

"To be sure Miss Mildways is a different kind of a friend to Lucy, from what Mrs Clutterbuck was: we thought Lucy's going as lady's maid there was such a fine thing, because Mrs. Clutterbuck is

such a good lady, and quite declined Miss Mildways' offer. Well, we have found out our mistake. A friend in need is a friend indeed."

"I have nothing to say against Mrs. Clutterbuck, Robin."

"Havn't you? then I have. Handsome is that handsome does, say I. She certainly gave the girl very high wages, and there were many advantages, no doubt, besides: but how could they compensate for destroying the poor thing's health, by making her sit up five nights in every week while the young ladies were at all the fine doings in London?"*

"Why you don't think, do you Robert—(hark! do but listen to the wind! what a gust that was, it quite shook the house! I am sure we should pray for all poor creatures at sea, for all that travel by land or by water, such a night as this!)—you don't think do you, that Mrs. Clutterbuck knew, or the Miss Clutterbucks remembered, that Lucy was not as stout as many other girls?"

"No certainly not. Mrs Clutterbuck's a very kind lady, and very charitable, and has always some scheme or another in hand, of doing good. One

* Fact.

while she's wild about the chimney-sweepers, and another while about factory children, or negroes, or gypsies."

"Well," replied Mrs. Tapps, interrupting him, "and a great deal of good she does."

"*Intends* to do, you mean, Mary; for she never gives herself time to follow out her own plans. She is all things by turns, and nothing long, as I heard her own husband said of her: the factory children swallow up the chimney-sweepers, and the chimney-sweepers swallow up the gypsies. And then, while she is making a moan over the miseries of people, it may be, hundreds of thousands of miles off, she has no eyes to see what is amiss in her own household,—no thoughtfulness for her own servants. She would give the gown off her back, I dare say, if it would benefit the negroes; but she never remembers that there may be white slaves as well as black ones. Upon my word, I believe Lucy would have been better off in a sugar plantation, than where she was."

I can't but own there is truth in what you say, Robert: they *were* very thoughtless about my poor Lucy: but they have been very kind since."

“In their *inquiries*,” said the schoolmaster, with an emphasis on the word: “you’re a good creature, Mary, and have a kind word for everybody;—but your case fails you. Mrs. Clutterbuck *means* well, —Miss Mildways *acts* well: one is always *talking*,—the other is always *doing* what is right.”

“Well, Robert, we should be all the better for it, no doubt, if we could see ourselves as other folks see us: and Mrs. Clutterbuck ———— Oh Robert, Robert, what a dreadful night it is! Hark.”

The gale, which had been rapidly rising, now swept against the house with fierce and frequent gusts;—and as Mrs. Tapps spoke, the crash of a falling tree, succeeded by another, and another, within a very brief interval, was heard in the distance: the room in which they were sitting seemed to rock and vibrate with the storm, in a manner which was quite appalling. The recollections of that tremendous night are yet too vivid and too recent for my readers not to remember with what feelings of awe they experienced its progress. In the humble abode in which we have laid our scene, terror had now silenced both the speakers. Brother and sister look-

ed at one another with pale faces, and each seemed to dread suggesting to the other the apprehensions which were filling their own minds. At length, Robert Spellman spoke, for he could not bear to think of leaving his sister in solitude. "You must let me sleep here to-night, Mary; I have no wife at home watching for me, and so I may as well take what rest I can in your easy chair. I reckon we shall none of us sleep much in such an awful tempest."

"Dear, kind, thoughtful Robin," replied Mary, comprehending in a moment her brother's motive;—and something more she was about to add, expressive of her hope that with the last tremendous gust the storm had expended its fury, and would now gradually subside,—when, as the words were on her lips, there came a fresh blast, which seemed to make the house rock from its summit to its base; and at the same moment there was heard, close at hand, the noise of some ponderous body, which, in its fall, seemed to bound once and again from the object which it had struck, and then to reach the ground with a dull, heavy sound. It was one of the upper-

most stones of the church spire, which the violence of the storm had dislodged, and which, rending and splintering in its precipitate course the various projections it had encountered, had sunk a yard deep into the soil of a new-made grave.

Robert Spellman and his sister both started from their seats, and without speaking a word rushed to a window which commanded a full view of the church-yard; but nothing was to be seen, for the light of the moon was, for the moment, wholly obscured by the masses of clouds which racked fearfully above their heads.

"We shall see what has happened, if we go to the door, Mary: we shall be safer too, I think."

To the door they went,—opened it; and with their backs against the wall of the house, (for they could scarcely otherwise have maintained their footing) waited till the moon had emerged once more.

Meanwhile, a loud howl of the wind, wilder and fiercer than any they had yet heard, swept past them; and had they not had the shelter of the projecting porch to screen them, they must have been thrown down by the fury of the hurricane. In another

second the moon shone forth, and at the same moment Robert Spellman, laying one hand on his sister's arm, pointed with the other to the spire : the iron-work of the weathercock, no longer in its upright position, was swaying backwards and forwards obliquely ; and not the weathercock only, but the summit of the spire itself was rocking visibly.

“ Merciful heaven ! ” exclaimed Mary, “ what is to become of us ? where can we go ? we shall be crushed to death if we stay here, I know we shall.” But Robert Spellman held her where she was ; and it was well he did so, for in another minute the uppermost part of the spire gave way, and while the weight, perhaps, of twenty tons of stone-work fell through the roof below with a tremendous crash, the weathercock itself was born forward by the wind, and dashed against the churchyard wall, within a few feet of where they were standing.

But this was only the prelude to a yet more terrific sight. Whether from the still increasing fury of the tempest, or the damage caused to the lower portion of the dilapidated building by the fall of the upper part of the spire, was never known, but as the

blast swept by once more, the whole body of the steeple from base to crown was seen to shake and totter,—to reel and stagger like a drunken man, and then slowly inclining to the south-east fell in a slanting direction, across the whole length of the church, and with the roar, as it seemed, of a hundred cannon, carried downwards in its descent, not the roof only, but a large portion of the southern and eastern walls of the church, which stood uninjured for a moment, and then crumbled, as it were, outwards, and so came to the ground.

A thick cloud of smoke-like dust rose from the ruins; but ere a minute had elapsed, the wind drifted it away,—and the distant echoes of the catastrophe were drowned in the noise of the tempest, which seemed to howl and moan with rage and shame for the devastation it had caused.

CHAPTER IV.

WHAT'S TO BE DONE NOW?

VARIOUS were the groups which from an early hour the following morning were to be seen winding their way to Tadbrook church-yard. High and low had risen that day with a thankful remembrance of Him whose providence had watched over them, and whose mercy had spared them amid the perils of the preceding night; and actuated by the same feeling, high and low had, as it were, instinctively turned their steps towards that now ruined house of prayer; where, as children of one common Father, they had for years past mingled their supplications and thanksgivings;—where many had received the life-giving

waters of baptism ;—where not a few had made their happy marriage vows ;—where almost all had come as Christian mourners to hear the words of hope and consolation which the Church speaks over the faithful dead.

Almost all who had it in their power to come, came ;—the most remarkable exceptions being Mr. Walter Tyler and Bill Tapps. The former, who had not had moral courage the day before to do what conscience all the while had told him was his duty, was now, through the same defect, glad to keep out of sight. He was one of those cowards who are always afraid to face a disagreeable thing, or hear a disagreeable truth. The latter, after celebrating his triumph over the Parson, returned home at day-break from the Leg of Mutton more than half-drunk, to see with his own eyes the practical advantages of deferring for six months the needful repairs of the church. The sight so enraged him, and the jeers of some of his thoughtless neighbours added such fuel to the flame, that between excitement and intoxication he conducted himself like a madman, and his poor wife would probably, as usual, have been the victim of

his violence, if she had not been fortunately kept out of his sight. Having, therefore, no one on whom to vent his rage, he slunk back to the public house to drown his vexation in more drink.

With these two painful exceptions, the exhibition of public feeling on the part of the inhabitants of Tadbrook was every way creditable to them. On each face was depicted the feeling of a severe personal misfortune, and not a few spoke to Mr. Sanderson (who was early at the scene of devastation) with tears in their eyes.

It was evident to the most ignorant in such matters, that the whole fabric must be taken down and rebuilt from the foundations, for although two of the main walls were still standing, they were so much shaken and out of the perpendicular, that their removal was inevitable.

The parishioners of Tadbrook had, therefore, the prospect before them of having to erect an entirely new church, whereas a few pounds of additional church-rate in former years would have served to keep the fabric, now in ruins, in adequate repair for themselves, and succeeding generations. *May the*

appointed guardians of many other venerable churches in our rural districts, take warning ere it be too late, and be induced,—if it be only from a consideration of the pecuniary part of the subject,—to save the edifices entrusted to them from such a fate as that which befel St. Antholin's !

A new church must be built, that was quite evident ; but where were the funds to come from, that should pay for the expenses of its erection ?

A meeting was held at the national school immediately ; and long and loud was the discussion that ensued. The tide of public feeling had in the course of three or four days set full against the very persons who had been at the height of popular favour. The memory of poor Mr. Oliver Ouzel was no longer held in veneration ; he was roundly abused as the author of all the mischief: Tapps, the orator of the last vestry meeting, was no where to be seen,—and Walter Tyler himself got such cold looks and rough words that he heartily wished he had never taken the office of churchwarden, while Mr. Sander-son and William Andrewes, who, within a week, had been unable to find a single supporter, were now lau-

ded up to the skies. Such is the value and permanency of popular favour! and they only are fit for public offices who view it at its proper worth, and undertake their duties with the simple motive of discharging them faithfully to the best of their power, and without reference to their own personal popularity.

Even Scantlings the builder, whose estimates had found so few to approve them, was now voted an honest man, and his opinion was required with respect to the portion of Tadbrook church which was yet standing.—“It must all come down,” he said; “indeed he believed it would come down of itself with the first high wind.”

“Then there was no help for it; they *must* build a new church?”

“Certainly, unless they intended to do without one?”

“And what did Mr. Scantlings think it might cost, upon the most economical plan?”

Mr. Scantlings could not take upon him to speak positively, but when he had learned the number of sittings required, said he supposed about £1500.

"Fifteen hundred pounds!" exclaimed a horror-struck rate-payer; "why that's more than double what the repairs would have cost a week ago!"

"Yes, Sir," replied Scantlings, "and four times as much as would have been required if Mr. Ouzel had attended to the Archdeacon's orders when he first spoke about it. I fear, gentlemen, you have been *penny wise and pound foolish*."

"Indeed we have," was the very general admission. "But what are we to do, Scantlings? how are we to find the money?"

"You can borrow money, gentlemen, on the credit of the church-rates,—at least if you can find any body to lend it you."

Walter Tyler and his neighbours looked very blank at each other at this suggestion, for the wicked agitation which had recently taken place on that subject, had indisposed people generally to trust their money on what was no longer felt to be good security.

"But is there no other means you can suggest?"

"Perhaps you would get a good round sum by subscription, if the gentry in the parish would set the example."

Two or three of the parishioners looked up at Mr. Sanderson; but then they recollected that he had already made them the offer of a hundred pounds, and they had rejected it. Perhaps, thought they, he will repeat his offer.

But Mr. Sanderson remained quite silent, and apparently his whole attention was absorbed by a hole he had just discovered in his boot.

“Well, but Scantlings, you have so much experience in these matters, you must know where there is any chance of our getting help.”

“Of course,” replied Scantlings, “you have already written to ask for aid from the Diocesan Church Building Society.”

No; nobody had thought of that. Would Mr. Sanderson be kind enough to do so?

“Oh, certainly.” So the meeting was adjourned till that day week. Meanwhile Mr. Sanderson wrote a proper application, and in due time an answer was received; which he then laid before them:—

“The Secretary of the Diocesan Church-building Society has laid Mr. Sanderson’s communication

with respect to the Church of Tadbrook St. Antholin before the Board: but regrets to say that the Board feel it would be inconsistent with their duty to the public if they were to hold out to the parishioners of Tadbrook the slightest hope of any grant from the Diocesan Fund. Having learned from the Archdeacon that the parishioners of Tadbrook, although aware of the dilapidation of their church, had uniformly failed in attention to his instructions, and had neglected to make any repairs whatever, the Board conceive themselves imperatively called upon to reject an application, which, if received, would be a direct encouragement to other parishes to pursue the same disastrous and inexcusable system."

"I expected as much," exclaimed Mr. Walter Tyler; "it's all owing to that old fool Oliver Ouzel. What need had he to go and set that Archdeacon against us? They say he pelted him with jackdaws' nests all the while he was getting up the belfry ladder; and now we must suffer for it:—for there's as much spite in archdeacons as in other men, I reckon; and so we shall get a Rowland for our *Oliver*. Ah!

you may laugh, William Andrewes, but this is no laughing matter. I thought we should have got four or five hundred pounds, perhaps, from this society. Well, they're a spiteful, stingy set. However, we shall be sure to get something handsome by subscription. I believe you wrote, Sir, to the Earl, and requested his patronage and co-operation."

"Yes, I did; for the Earl of Bungay is a thorough friend of the Church; and living, as he does, in the next parish, I thought we had something of a claim upon him; but I am sorry to say I had a note from him this morning, which is any thing but encouraging. Here it is." And Mr. Sanderson took another letter from a packet which he was holding in his hand.

?

" Herondale Castle, Tuesday Morning.

"Dear Sir,—I had already heard, before I received your letter, of the fate of Tadbrook Church, and the intelligence had filled me with the deepest sorrow and indignation;—sorrow, that such a beautiful edifice should be destroyed,—indignation, at those who with their eyes open, and (as it is represented to me)

in defiance of repeated warnings, have allowed it to go to decay. If I understand your letter rightly, these churchwardens have now the assurance and presumption to suppose that the neighbouring gentry will enter into a subscription for the purpose of making the rebuilding of Tadbrook Church an easy matter to the rate-payers of the parish. What others may do, I know not; but from myself they shall never have a shilling. Let them suffer as they deserve. I am sorry to answer any communication so ungraciously, especially one from a person whom I respect so much as yourself; but I conceive I should set a most mischievous example were I not to meet this appeal with a prompt and decided negative.

“Always, dear Sir,

“Very faithfully yours,

“BUNGAY.”

William Andrewes shook his head. “Never knew the Earl refuse to undraw his purse-strings in my life before. Half his income, I should think, must go in doing good. If *he* won't help us, we sha'n't get much aid elsewhere, I fear.”

“No,” replied Mr. Sanderson, “these letters are all very much in the same strain. Here is one from Sir Alured Sulney, another from Colonel Arblaster, both strongly worded, and both negatives: Mrs. Skeffington has sent half a sovereign, and Mr. Wagstaff will ‘consider of it.’ ”

“What are we to do, Sir?” inquired Walter Tyler in despair. “There seems to be quite a run against us. It’s really very hard; don’t you think so, William?”

His brother-churchwarden could not conscientiously say that he saw anything but perfect justice in the feeling which the neighbourhood evinced on the subject. And he was quite aware that although rebuilding their church would be a most severe and heavy burden, still Tadbrook was a richer parish than many others of the same size. However, though William Andrewes felt that they were only reaping as they had sown, he thought it unnecessary on the present occasion to say so, and he therefore turned the subject by observing, “I really don’t know what we are to do, unless we can get Mrs. Clutterbuck to interest herself in our behalf. If she

once undertakes a thing, we all know that she will labour like a galley-slave to accomplish it."

"Mrs. Clutterbuck! I protest I never thought of that: but as sure as my name is Wat Tyler, she's the woman to carry us through. If Mr. Sanderson, now, would not object to going and speaking to Mrs. Clutterbuck, I should look upon the business as in a manner settled."

"Well, I am quite ready to be spokesman to Mrs. Clutterbuck," said the Rector; "but I must know first what petition to make to her."

"Perhaps she could get Major Clutterbuck to give us a handsome donation? It would be something to start upon."

"Wouldn't it be better to try and induce him to lend some money on the credit of the church-rates,—say a thousand pounds,—at five per cent. interest,—and a tenth part of the principal to be paid off yearly?"

"Good again, William Andrewes, very good; you're the man to help us at a pinch, I see: and as most of the rate-payers are the Major's tenants, he will feel pretty sure of getting his money. But why

not ask him, while we are about it, for the whole sum?"

"Because perhaps we shall be able to raise the remainder, or at least a portion of it, other ways," replied William Andrewes; who knew that Mr. Sanderson only delayed offering the once-rejected hundred pounds till he could see some prospect of its being rightly applied.

In an hour's time, Mr. Sanderson was seated in the drawing-room at Tadbrook House. He had already, in a private interview, secured Mrs. Clutterbuck's influence with her husband on behalf of the proposed loan; and as that influence was generally supposed to be all-powerful,—this part of the affair might be considered as settled, except so far as that Mrs. Clutterbuck felt sure that the Major would insist on the whole sum being paid off in five years instead of ten, a stipulation which would of course just double the rates for that period.

Mrs. Clutterbuck had now returned to the drawing-room, in the full flurry of excitement which attended the commencement of any of the good lady's

schemes of benevolence ; and was imparting to her daughters and to old Miss Mildways (the late rector's sister), who had called in the meanwhile, the general purport of Mr. Sanderson's visit.

The leading features of Mrs. Clutterbuck's character have, on the whole, been so fairly presented to the reader in the conversation between Robert Spellman and his sister, that a further description of it seems unnecessary. She was a most humane, charitable, well-intentioned woman ; but, having no settled opinions,—no fixed principles of action, she was continually led away by the impulse of the moment, and was, therefore, not rarely entangled in schemes and projects of very questionable utility, and found co-operating with persons, with whom, as a consistent churchwoman, she would hardly have allowed herself to become connected. Under such circumstances, it is not to be wondered at that her notions on the responsibilities of wealth and influence,—of the dangers of luxury and self-indulgence,—of the inconsistency of modern habits with Christian self-denial,—of modern charity with Christian almsgiving, were as low as that of the world around

her. She was seated, expensively though plainly dressed, on a well-stuffed couch in a drawing-room, furnished as drawing-rooms now-a-days are ;—walls papered with gold and crimson, and covered with costly pictures; huge pier-glasses; curtains of Lyons' silk; Axminster carpet; easy chairs of every conceivable and inconceivable shape; tables of costly wood, covered with costlier playthings,—illuminated albums, musical boxes, miniatures, and so forth; buhl cabinets, and marble vases on pedestals of the same rich material,—and the moveable articles of furniture so heaped and crowded together, that it was almost a work of difficulty for a person to thread their way between them.

“Ah!” thought Mr. Sanderson, as he cast his eyes over all these ‘*necessary comforts*,’ (as we, in these times, call our needless superfluities,) “the contents of this room would pay for the rebuilding of Tadbrook church.”

And yet the drawing-room at Tadbrook House was not finer than such apartments in country houses of the same size very commonly are; and neither Major or Mrs. Clutterbuck were (in the opinion of the world) at all extravagant people.

“It seems to me, Mr. Sanderson, that the best thing we could do, would be to have a Bazaar.”

“Do you really think so, mama?” said Caroline Clutterbuck; “people are grown so tired of bazaars.”

“Very true, love; but these things require a little management. If I have a bazaar at Snobbington,” (the next post town,) “the chances are that I do not sell above a dozen sixpenny pincushions. Nobody will come near us but the natives, who will just stalk into the room, say a few words to one another, and stalk out again. But if we could contrive to have it *here*, in the national school-room, in the Snobbington race-week,—if we can get the Duchess of Thetford to drive over,—we, meanwhile, charging half-a-crown or five shillings for admission into the room, in order that there may be no crowd, and her Grace may not be incommoded,—we shall have such a crowd directly, that it will be well if her Grace is not squeezed to death. These things must be very exclusive,—you must make a favour or a difficulty about them, or they will be sure to be a failure.”

“But who shall we get to have stalls?” asked Selina Clutterbuck.

“Why let me see : Emma Johnson and her sister are fine looking girls, and don’t mind being stared at,—they are used to this sort of thing, so they would do :—and Lady Underwood, (to be sure she’s quite a stick,—but then Sir Ralph is county member, and it would sound well)—yes, Lady Underwood would do for another ; and Mrs. Brassington (there must be somebody to talk and laugh with the men) and . . . and . . . but in short I don’t see any difficulty on that score. And we can all work bags and footstools,—(Miss Mildways you really must contribute a footstool)—and we must get Charlotte Smee to compose a song for us, and Rosa Smudge to do us some drawings.”

Hitherto the conversation had proceeded with such rapidity on the part of Mrs. Clutterbuck and her daughters, that Mr. Sanderson had not had the opportunity to put in a word. He now, however, said with perfect kindness and gentleness of manner, that while he fully appreciated Mrs. Clutterbuck’s motives, *he could not but feel the strongest repug-*

nance in attempting to raise money for so sacred a purpose in such a manner.

Old Miss Mildways who had hitherto been watching, with something like severity, every turn of his countenance, now brightened up, and gave an approving nod, but said nothing.

“Why dear me!” exclaimed Mrs. Clutterbuck, “you really do surprise me. What possible objection can there be to a bazaar?—they are recognized by the highest authorities in these matters,—and dozens,—I believe I might say hundreds—of modern churches have been built chiefly by the aid of bazaars. There was a bazaar for the church at A——, and another for the chapel at B——,” &c., &c., &c. And good Mrs. Clutterbuck ran on through half the letters in the alphabet.

“Oh no doubt,” answered Mr. Sanderson, “these bazaars are abundantly numerous,—and their prevalence is one of the very worst features in the proceedings of the (so called) charitable world: and no doubt, those in authority, have, in the absolute need of churches, and the hopelessness of raising funds by other means, tolerated and submitted to this sys-

tem of bazaars; but surely every one who reflects on the subject, without prejudice, must feel that such things are objectionable on many grounds."

"Objectionable, Mr. Sanderson! why?"

"I will tell you why *I* object to them. First, there is to my mind something very shocking and irreverent in Christians not bearing to part with their money even in God's behalf, without getting all the pleasure which they can out of it previously. Next, the parade of a bazaar, whether on the part of the buyers or sellers, seems to me wholly inconsistent with our duty as Christians not to let our left hand know what our right hand is bestowing. Thirdly, the means used to get money, so commonly employed on these occasions, namely by securing the attendance of some great person, and thus attracting the crowd, is an honouring of creature rather than the Creator, which must needs be offensive in His sight. Further, the plan of charging for the goods sold, a sum three or four times more than they are worth is very dishonest, and in many cases, I fear, bazaars have operated considerably to the detriment of the honest tradesman.—Again,"...

“Oh spare, spare us any more of the charges of your indictment. We must plead guilty, and desire to be recommended to mercy.”

“Be assured, madam,” replied Mr. Sanderson smiling, “you shall have all the mercy I can shew you: but you required my honest opinion with respect to such things, and I have given it you. I abominate the whole system, and think them a disgrace to a Christian country. It is a disgrace to us that with our means we can make no sacrifices, and that we will give God nothing without seeing what we can get in return for it.”

“But if you object to a bazaar, Mr. Sanderson, how are we to get the money?”

“Oh! I know,” cried Selina Clutterbuck, “we can have a shilling subscription—get a shilling, you know, or a half-crown, or whatever sum you determine upon, from every body you meet. The amount is so small that nobody has the face to refuse you, and so a large sum is eventually collected, without any body feeling the poorer.”

“Yes, indeed,” said Mrs. Clutterbuck, “that is a very good plan, and a very successful one too.”

Lady Julia Rackham got five and twenty pounds in half-pence that way for her old nurse. We will certainly set up a half-crown subscription directly. Come, Miss Mildways, you shall have the honour of standing at the head of my list: will you give me two and sixpence?"

"No, ma'am," replied the old lady, "for I thoroughly disapprove that sort of limited subscription: make it unlimited, and I will give you five and twenty pounds: and if there is no bazaar, I will make it fifty."

"Strange, unaccountable old woman that," said Mrs. Clutterbuck, when Miss Mildways had taken her leave. "Very glad to have got so much out of her. Not but what she ought to have given more,—for she is very well off;—and her late brother was battening and fattening on his living for forty years."

"The living of Tadbrook, madam, is worth about £250 a-year," observed Mr. Sanderson; "a fact which was likely to impede considerably, I should imagine, the battening and fattening process to which you allude.—But," continued he, remarking

Mrs. Clutterbuck's confusion, "you must allow me to suggest to you, that, small as you think Miss Mildways' contribution, you would only have got a two hundredth part of it, if your half-crown subscription had satisfied her notions of charity. Alas! these multitudes of little subscriptions are another proof of the evil spirit of the times. The clergy, I fear, have neglected to ask for the full amount of what *can* be given (the only Christian limit of what *ought* to be given), and so the laity have come to think that a meagre portion of their superfluities is all that they need offer to God."

"Superfluities? what do you mean by superfluities?" asked the lady of the house.

"Whatever is not absolutely necessary."

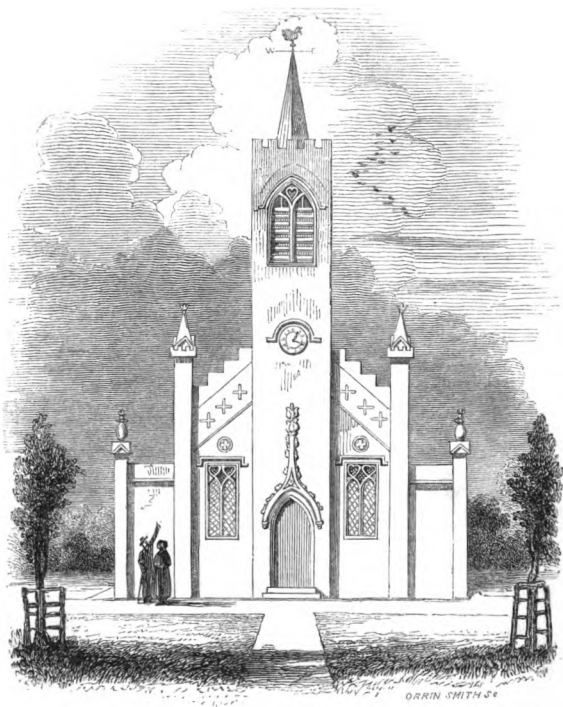
"Ah! but what is necessary for one class, Mr. Sanderson, is not necessary for another. *I* could not dress like the housemaid, for instance."

"I do not think you are called on to do so. Nevertheless, if truth must be spoken, you, and all others of your rank, are surrounded with superfluities, the parting with which might afford many a wholesome instance of self-denial."

“For example?”

“A few less pier-glasses,—the absence of a single picture,—(and surely such things as those are superfluous,)—would put hundreds at the disposal of many who speak as though they had had scarce a guinea to spare.” And Mr. Sanderson’s eye wandered unconsciously over the beautiful furniture that surrounded him.

“Well, really, Sir, this beats anything I ever heard of. Strip the walls! sell the pictures! and clothe ourselves in linsey-wolsey! *Superfluities, indeed!!*”



MR. COMPO'S DESIGN FOR THE CHEAP CHURCH.

CHAPTER V.

HOW TO DO IT CHEAP.

IT happened unfortunately at this time, that Mr. Sanderson was unexpectedly called away from home. Having however expressed his opinion so honestly and openly with respect to the intended bazaar, and having declared so unequivocally that he considered such a mode of raising money for the purpose intended highly objectionable, he took it for granted that he had put a stop to the scheme.

Great was his disappointment, (not unmingled with self-reproach,) when, on his return home, he found that during his absence great preparations had been made, and indeed almost everything ar-

ranged for the execution of Mrs. Clutterbuck's plan.

Under such circumstances he felt in a great strait: he must now either appear to sanction what he disapproved, or be the cause of postponing for an indefinite time, the rebuilding of St. Antholin's. However, after reflection,—though still in much doubt and unwillingness, he thought it better to interfere no further. He had great and just misgivings that he was sacrificing too much to expediency; but then, on the other hand, many plausible excuses might be alleged. He could not bear to throw obstacles in the way of Mrs. Clutterbuck's benevolent intentions, or to do anything which could delay the rebuilding of Tadbroke church:—the necessary funds must be obtained somehow, and if Christian liberality would not find the means,—if churchmen would not come forward (and there were those in the parish who might have done so) and make themselves responsible for the sum required,—why perhaps it was better that the bazaar scheme, or the half-crown subscription, or the substitute (whatever it might be) for true charity, should be adopted.

Accordingly, after months of hard labour, solicitations for contributions and so forth, the necessary quantity of work-bags, and footstools, and pin-cushions,—of washy drawings,—of screens and card-racks,—and all the trumpery which gold paper and embossed cards combine to produce for such occasions, were prepared ; and summer weather and the Snobbington race week brought the bazaar. The Duchess was propitious,—the fair stall-keepers rejoiced in the prospect before them,—Mrs. Clutterbuck was in a whirl of trouble, excitement, and delight. The day had been chosen with great judgment,—being the only one on which the visitors to the races were for the most part disengaged,—and there was no reason to anticipate a failure or disappointment of any kind. Every thing, however, connected with Tadbrook and its church, seemed destined to go wrong. The long expected day arrived,—as bright and cloudless a summer's day as ever dawned ; but with it came the announcement that—

“ By permission of the worshipful the Mayor of

Snobbington, and under patronage of the Duke of Thetford, Signor Salamandro, the original Babylonian conjuror, professor of legerdemain to the king of Persia and the Sublime Porte, and now actually on his way through Snobbington to Ispahan, would, *on that day only*, exhibit the wonders of the mystic art in the Town-hall, and repeat, for the four hundredth and forty-second time, his extraordinary performance of thrusting a red hot poker into a barrel of gunpowder without causing an explosion."

What possible chance had poor Mrs. Clutterbuck against a rival with such pretensions? Not one in twenty of those who proposed visiting the Tadbrook bazaar had any motive beyond that of personal gratification. It was very proper, and all that, to build a new church,—and they hoped the funds would be raised, — but *self*, not the church, was the motive which was taking them to Tadbrook. And as soon as something which promised more amusement was offered at Snobbington,—Snobbington became the point of attraction. "A bazaar might be attended any day ;—the young Duchess of Thetford

was sure to appear in public on some future occasion, for she resided in the county ;—but a conjuror on his road to Ispahan,—a man who could stick a hot poker into a barrel of gunpowder without blowing up the house,—this was an opportunity which never *could* occur again.”

Accordingly Tadbrook was deserted ; and the bazaar so far a failure, that though prolonged for three more days, only £100 was collected in all ; and Mrs. Clutterbuck returned home the fourth evening, weary and disconsolate, with a load of care and unsold pincushions. Nor was the half-crown subscription more successful. It reached £20, and made no further progress. Taking, therefore, these two items, together with the donations of Mr. Sanderson and Miss Mildways, all that the parishioners were able to collect was about £250, out of an estimated expense of £1,500 : for of course Major Clutterbuck’s loan, though a temporary accommodation, was nothing more.

They must build a cheaper church. This was a proposal which Mr. Sanderson heard with deep regret, for it involved the erection of an edifice dis-

similar to that which formerly existed. In the plans and estimates prepared by Scantlings, the original proportions of the old church had been scrupulously followed. He judged, with more wisdom in such matters than builders usually exhibit, that he could not do better than copy the ancient pile which had been destroyed,—if not in the ornamental details, yet in the general effect; and matters were to be so arranged, as that the parapets and other elaborate parts of the old fabric might be added subsequently. This suggestion proceeded from Mr. Sanderson, who, though unfortunately not possessed of any practical knowledge of Gothic architecture, had correct taste enough to be aware that the nearer they were able to approach the original design, the more likely were they to escape the abominations of modern church-building.

But Scantlings' estimates did not suit the taste of those who desired to build a church for the least possible sum. A church, it was said, had been erected in Lancashire at about thirty shillings the sitting: if such a thing could be done at Tadbroke, it would be a wonderful relief to the rate-payers;

at any rate it must be attempted. And great was the satisfaction expressed, when it was known that Mrs. Clutterbuck, always kind and considerate, and nothing daunted by the disappointment of her bazaar scheme, had put herself in communication with an architect of great celebrity for building cheap churches, and that she had actually invited him to Tadbrook House.

To the drawing-room of the same mansion, we now propose to transport the reader.—The parties there assembled were the same as on a former occasion, with the exception that in the place of Miss Mildways, there was a sallow young man, with a long wooden face, and ill made figure,—half sloven, and half coxcomb in dress. A fine velvet waiscoat, with a wondrous superfluity of gold chain and pendant seals, betrayed the latter quality; while the large dirty hands thrust ever and anon into a profusion of lank greasy hair, gave unequivocal tokens of the former.

“Permit me, Madam,” said Mr. Compo, affecting a sort of mincing lisp, which he intended should be interesting, but which his harsh gruff voice fail-

ing to execute, became an intermediate sound between a grunt and a whine, and changed into the one or the other as he raised or lowered his tone,—“Permit me, Madam, just to run through this portfolio, before I proceed to give my ideas on the subject of Tadbrook church. A long study of the principles of gothic architecture, and of Sir Christopher Wren’s and Batty Langley’s exquisite modifications of it, have taught me that it is quite possible to combine it with all the elegancies of modern refinement, and to introduce it with as much effect and propriety into a snuffer-tray, as into the choir of a cathedral. See this elegant design, for instance,” continued the artist, handing round a drawing,—“that is a gothic pigeon-house which I built two years ago for a very wealthy banker in Gloucestershire: you will agree with me, I think, that nothing can be more light, airy, appropriate, and at the same time more pure gothic than that pigeon-house. Now do me the favour to look at this,” (shewing another sketch) “what do you take that for?”

“Another gothic pigeon-house,” said Miss Clutterbuck boldly; “a companion, probably, to what

you have already shewn us,—and a sweet pretty termination to an avenue the pair would make.”

“Look again Ma’am; is there no difference in the base of the two designs?”

“Oh, yes, I see: the first has a base like any other building: the last has a bottom like a”

“Pepper-caster, you would have said,” replied Mr. Compo interrupting: “and you are quite right, it *is* a pepper-caster in the gothic style. One of the new peers, Lord Mobgrub, did me the honour to commission me to design him a cruet-stand, as his Lordship had no family plate, and I do assure you, ladies, he was enchanted,—perfectly enchanted, with this very slight sketch; which, however, I should not have shewn (being quite unfinished) had I not wished to exemplify the fact, that any thing and every thing may be gothicized, from a pigeon-house to a pepper-caster;—and successfully,” added Mr. Compo, drawing up his neckcloth, “in the hands of a person who understands his business.”

To this Mrs. Clutterbuck assented: indeed how could she do otherwise, when she felt in absolute uncertainty which was the pigeon-house, and which the pepper-caster?

The architect having, as he conceived, thus made a favourable impression on his audience, proceeded to exhibit the contents of his portfolio to the inmates of Tadbrook House. Most heartily do I wish that I could place the same collection in the reader's hands;—for he would at once be put in possession of what is at present much needed,—a compendium of every thing which church-builders ought to *avoid*. In very truth, Mr. Compo's designs were not only full of the vulgarity and bad taste of “modern gothic,” but he did not seem to have the slightest knowledge of the principles of ancient ecclesiastical architecture, or any feeling beyond that of pounds, shillings, and pence. Having commenced his career among Dissenters, he had been taught to make his meeting-houses look as like churches as possible: and this had fully answered to him in more ways than one; among others, it had attracted the notice of sundry *cheap* church-builders, and obtained for him what is called ‘a good connexion;’ so having pleased the Dissenters, by making their conventicles like churches, he was now reversing the experiment, and making his churches like conventicles.—And, worse than this, he was the active means of instilling

those low irreverent notions with respect to the *uses* to which places of worship may be applied that seem to be growing common among us. Here, for an instance, was a sketch of a smart stuccoed chapel, with *wine vaults* beneath it: there, was a plan for a church, which was to serve on week-days for a national school. Then there were buildings of every conceivable shape: octagons, and horse-shoes, rondas, and ovals, all calling themselves churches, and setting order, decency of arrangement, and primitive custom, at defiance. Towers without naves, and naves without chancels,—or, on the other hand, two spires stuck on either side of a little thick-set nave, or a huge overgrown vestry swallowing up a diminutive chancel.—Then his interiors! it was evident that they were all *preaching* houses,—not houses of prayer. As for style,—Norman or early English, decorated or perpendicular,—were all one to him; he knew as much about one as the other,—that is, nothing at all; and though he chattered glibly enough about crockets and finials, corbels and gurgoyles, dripstones and mouldings, he was as ignorant of their application and form at different

eras of church building, as if he had lived all his life in China;—in short, Mr. Compo was neither more nor less than a professor of cheap modern gothic; and if any reader is doubtful what that is, let him compare the four last built churches in his neighbourhood, with the four oldest. I will engage that the investigation will teach him more on this subject than a volume of letter-press.

The contents of the portfolio having been examined, Mrs. Clutterbuck addressing Mr. Sanderson, observed, that she believed Mr. Compo had already made a design for the new church of St. Antholin.

“Why Me’m,” said Mr. Compo, “it is hardly fair to say that: but I have been studying the locality, and while doing so just scratched a few lines on the back of a letter, which I have since transferred to a sheet of paper, and rendered more intelligible;—but it is a mere sketch, Me’m,—the merest sketch in life. Of course, it cannot be expected that we can have much ornament for so small a sum as £1200: and, therefore, as the west-end fronts the turnpike road, it will be as well to throw all our decorations to that side. Here then, is our tower.”

“Tower!” exclaimed Selina Clutterbuck; “are we only to have a tower? can’t we have anything like the dear old spire?”

“Quite impossible, Me’m, I assure you, with such limited funds.”

“Not even a little one?” inquired Caroline. “Really that tower looks so very low, and *dumpy*. Could’nt it be elongated,—pulled out a little?”

“Upon my word, Me’m, that is a very happy thought, I believe we might arrange matters as you suggest: and then to be sure there might be a little spire on the top; something light and airy, you know, that would carry a weathercock. There, Me’m, please to look at this amended drawing. At the summit of the tower comes a neat little spire springing from very handsome battlements—(we can get them ready-made in Dabbaway’s patent cement, at a very low rate): immediately below the battlements would appear a large belfry window.”

“Is not the window full large?” asked Mr. Sanderson.

“Why, perhaps it may be,” replied Mr. Compo; “but you must take into consideration that as there is to be but one bell, and that a small one”

"Only one?" sighed forth Mrs. Clutterbuck, as she remembered the melodious chimes to which in bygone years she used to listen with delight.

"Yes, Me'm, quite impossible to have more than one: very expensive articles, bells: and so, as we can only have one, and that a small one, it is very desirable to make the belfry windows large enough, in order that it may be heard at a distance. Below the window, we must have a small circle with a clock face;—(the clock may be got hereafter): and underneath the clock comes the door, enriched with an ogee canopy, and ornamented with crockets and a finial."

"Sweetly pretty indeed," said Caroline Clutterbuck; pray what do you call this style?"

"Why, Me'm, from its elegant vegetative appearance, it approaches the nearest to the florid gothic,—I might call it florid gothic improved."

"Or gothic run to seed," replied Mr. Sanderson quietly.

"Thank you, Sir,—thank you: an admirable name indeed," replied Mr. Compo, apparently without the least suspicion that Mr. Sanderson was bantering him. "Have you anything to suggest fur-

ther, Sir, with reference to this front? On each side of the tower, you see, is a window, with a quatrefoil over it,—and a turret, instead of buttresses at each angle. I fear I may seem vain, but if there is one thing more than another about which I might be allowed to boast, it would be about those turrets: they are entirely my own invention. I have introduced them in several places, and they have been invariably admired. Don't you think they will suit this building?"

"Yes, indeed," replied Mr. Sanderson; "I think they are very well suited to one another." Any body but Mr. Compo would have perceived by Mr. Sanderson's manner that no compliment was here intended, and would have forborn any further appeal: but our architect's vanity was not apt to take alarm suddenly, and nothing doubting his own taste, he continued, "I am happy to hear you express such an opinion, Sir;—and I flatter myself you will not fail to approve my designs for the interior of Tadbrook church, as much as you do this exterior."

Mr. Sanderson coughed.

"By the way, you have not looked at the side

view,—here it is,—quite plain;—the building is not much in sight,—and the sides are not meant to be seen at all;—rather bald and uninteresting you would say? I am afraid it may be so: but we must keep to our estimates; and what can be done for £1200?”

The question seemed unanswerable; and Mr. Compo bringing forward a fresh sketch proceeded. “Here Me’m,” (addressing Mrs. Clutterbuck,) “is the proposed interior.—The rule I prescribe to myself when I make plans for a church is this, to arrange matters so that the pulpit may have the most conspicuous place: reverend gentlemen like to be seen as well as heard,” (this was said with a smile at Mr. Sanderson)—“and the congregation like to see the minister in comfort from their pews.”

Mr. Sanderson thought it very hopeless to attempt to combat the several details of Mr. Compo’s frightful design; his object was to get rid of the man altogether; for his own good taste convinced him that such an edifice as that proposed to be erected (though certainly not worse than many which have been *perpetrated* of late years,) would be an

eye-sore to the whole neighbourhood. However, when he saw the lofty pulpit raised to a level with the galleries (for, of course, Mr. Compo never built a church without as many galleries as possible,) while the lowly altar was so literally in the background, (being placed in a small recess behind the pulpit,) as to be wholly out of sight,—he expressed his hope that some more decent arrangement might be made.

Mr. Compo looked puzzled ; for he knew he had given great satisfaction to several celebrated preachers in populous districts, by his arrangement of their pulpits. However, he was quite ready to concede that Mr. Sanderson was the proper person to decide the matter,—and immediately suggested that instead of the proposed mass of carpentry in the centre, there should be *two* pulpits of equal height on either side, one for the reader, the other for the preacher.

“ Really, Sir,” said Mr. Sanderson, “ there is neither authority or precedent for such an arrangement,—although some few churches may be found into which it has been introduced of late years :

and at any rate if the *prayers* are to be *preached* to the people as well as the *sermon*, *one* pulpit might suffice. Pray let me have 'a convenient seat,' to read service in, as the canons prescribe,—not a tower."

"Well, certainly, Me'm," said Mr. Compo, addressing himself once more to Mrs. Clutterbuck, "if the pulpit be removed from the centre aisle, we shall have a beautiful place for the stove."

"But an iron pipe will be such an ugly object in the middle of the church."

"Very true, Me'm; but there is no need of an iron pipe,—at least of a visible one. As we must be economical, we should have one of Stynx' and Kindlefint's fifty shilling stoves,—carry the smoke under the floor of the pews, up one of the cast-iron pillars that support the gallery, and so out through the roof at the top of the gable, where we can fix a little cast-iron pinnacle, perforated on all sides to let out the smoke;—or, if you like, a cross made hollow, for the same purpose: it would look very neat, only many persons object to crosses as being popish."

"I wonder whether those stoves are safe," observed Mrs. Clutterbuck.

“Perfectly, Me’m,” said Mr. Compo; “the inventor is a relative of my own, and they are in such universal request, that although he completes a hundred every week, he can’t make them fast enough.”

“Well, this sounds a very delightful plan:—warm comfortable church,—snug easy pews,—really there will be every temptation to people to attend, if it be only for the luxury of the thing. Pray what height are the pews to be?”

“About five foot, Me’m,” replied Mr. Compo; “and you see we shall be pewed throughout. Excuse me, Mr. Sanderson, if you’ll look at the ground plan(no Sir, not that, that’s the lecture room, in the mechanic’s institute, at Snobbington;—stay, let me look,—no, it *is* the church I see) if you’ll look at that ground plan, you’ll give me credit for the arrangement: not one sitting lost: every body packed together close as wax, and nobody incommoded.”

A vague feeling passed through Mr. Sanderson’s mind (who, be it remembered, was still a very young man, and had hitherto paid no attention to

architecture,) that this modern principle of packing and cramming was something very different from that which had inspired the builders of our vast cathedrals,—and as he was reflecting on the matter, with the plan still in his hand,—it occurred to him that there was no place marked for the font.

“Font!” cried Mr. Compo, when a reference was made to him on the subject;—“Surely, Sir, you would not have had any space lost by the introduction of one of those great, ugly, cumbersome stone fonts, which you see in the old churches? It would have occupied the room of three or four sittings. Besides, they are things which are obsolete now,—quite gone out of fashion.”

“I crave pardon for my ignorance,” said Mr. Sanderson; “fonts then are no longer necessary?—I suppose that registration is to supersede the Sacrament of Baptism. In good sooth, the march of intellect is advancing in double quick time.”

“You have misunderstood me, Sir,” replied the architect: “I did not mean that Tadbrook should be without a font: but *stone* fonts are expensive articles; and as, of course, it is very desirable to build

our churches now-a-days as cheaply as possible, a neat, unexpensive substitute has been devised, which is now generally adopted, and which I proposed as the most economical arrangement for your new edifice."

"And pray what is that?" asked Mr. Sanderson.

"A portable vase of white Wedgwood ware, with a cover to it; which can be set *on* the communion table, when there is a baptism; and *under* it, when not wanted."

"I am very sorry to hear that anything is being 'generally adopted' in our churches which is directly forbidden by the canons of the Church," said Mr. Sanderson.

"Forbidden, Sir! how so?" inquired Mr. Compo.

"If you will turn to the eighty-first canon, you will see. It is there appointed that 'there shall be a font of *stone*,'—not of crockery,—'in every church and chapel where baptism is to be ministered;' that it shall 'be set in the ancient usual places;' and therefore, neither *on* the communion table, nor *under* it; and that in this font '*only*, the minister shall baptize publicly.' There are just three points insist-

ed on by the canon, and every one of them is infringed by your economical arrangement."

Mr. Compo could, of course, only confess that he had never studied the canons, and express his opinion that many of those who had to do with new churches were in just the same predicament.

"I fear it may be the case," replied Mr. Sanderson; "but for myself, I must beg to decline an earthenware font, and to insist on one of stone; and there will be the less difficulty on this point, as the old font has been found to be very little injured."

Mr. Compo's face brightened up at the last piece of intelligence. "I am very glad to hear it, Sir; a new stone font would be very expensive, and it is quite essential in these days to do these sort of things as cheap as possible."

"Why?" asked Mr. Sanderson drily.

"Because people grudge the expense."

"You are an architect, I believe, in considerable practice, and you have, no doubt, the means of judging. But allow me to ask you, do you find people equally grudging of expense when their own houses are to be built?"

Mr. Compo could hardly forbear smiling at the simplicity (as it appeared to him) of such a question. "No, no ; they are lavish enough where their personal comforts are concerned : but we have all got into the way of speaking and acting, as if anything was good enough for a church."

"*Any* thing good enough for a church? *Nothing* is good enough for a church ;—nothing too costly,—nothing too precious! You look surprised, Mr. Compo," continued the Rector of Tadbroom, "at hearing such language. Certainly it is little in accordance with the feelings of the present day ; little in accordance with the principles which those feelings have forced you to adopt as a church-builder. But I appeal from both to the Word of God. I find there that the highest of all worship is that which is purely spiritual ; I find there that the costliest offerings we can make to God, are all unworthy of Him ; we can but give Him of His own. But I find there likewise, that the Most High will, nevertheless, condescend to dwell in temples built with hands ; and I find that those who laboured most earnestly to make His temples most worthy (so far as human

means will allow) of His presence, by precious gifts and offerings, are ever spoken of with commendation. When, therefore, I see a self-indulgent age stinting Him of the honour due to His Name and House,—pleading its own poverty, or arguing that the enriching and adorning of churches is unnecessary,—I can only listen with sorrow and disgust, to what must be either hypocrisy or self-deception. Upon such grounds, I detest the very name of a ‘cheap church.’ And believe me, Sir, gentlemen of your profession, could hardly do this country greater service than by positively refusing to aid the schemes by which modern covetousness is continually endeavouring to defraud the Almighty of His own.”

CHAPTER VI.

HOW A CHEAP BARGAIN MAY PROVE A DEAR ONE.

It was with a heavy heart that the Rector of Tadbrook returned homewards, for he was contrasting in his mind's eye the stability, and costliness, and beauty of the now ruined pile, with the hideous, ill-proportioned, unsubstantial fabric which Mr. Compo proposed to rear. And how the evil was to be remedied, he saw not; for the only possible chance of getting rid of Mr. Compo (backed as he was by the Clutterbuck influence, and strong in his popularity as a cheap church-builder) was to find some one who would undertake the task at a still lower price, which, of course, would be to increase the evil. As to argu-

ing with a vestry-meeting about the principles of correct taste, or inducing them to prefer cost and beauty to cheap ugliness, that seemed to be quite hopeless. One possible chance, however, of avoiding what now appeared to be all but inevitable occurred to him. Mr. Sanderson was well aware that the church-builders in old times were content to rear their sacred edifices gradually. In many cases, what was commenced by one generation was not finished till their children's children were laid in the dust. The general plan once settled, and a commencement made, the rest was completed as means and opportunities permitted, and with such modifications only as resulted from changes in architectural taste, or from the transition of one style to another during the progress of its erection. Thus, the nave, it may be, was erected first, then the chancel; after that one of the transepts, then another; next the tower was raised; and last of all, perhaps, the tower was crowned with its taper spire. "And why should not this system be adopted at St. Antholin's?" Mr. Sanderson asked himself. "Surely it cannot be that the spirit of Christian liberality is wholly dead among us: it can-

not be that the love of money has so hardened people's hearts, that even in this age of mammon-worship, they will grudge the Almighty a temple worthy of His honour, when the requisite outlay will only be gradual, and no great sacrifice or self-denial is required !”

So thought and reasoned the Rector of Tadbrook, forgetting the miserable excuses which selfishness and religious indifference have ever ready at hand ; and which, however contemptible in themselves, are certain to find ready acceptance with undisciplined minds, that is, with the many. So sanguine, indeed, was Mr. Sanderson, that he consulted Scantlings once more, and obtained a plan for a nave only. However, when he called a vestry for the purpose of taking the subject into consideration, he was met by universal opposition. One thought that, since the church must be built, it would be better “to do it, and have done with it ;”—half-a-dozen others protested against any plan but the cheapest ; they “would never consent to give sixpence extra to have the finest church in the kingdom ; for their part a plain building would do for them,—the plainer

the better, (as plain as the county jail, or the union workhouse,)—they didn't admire pomp." Some others said, that they thought Mr. Compo's drawings very fine; they would still have a grand looking church, and the new steeple would be nearly as high as the old one. It was evident that Mr. Sanderson had not a person in the room that sided with him, except William Andrewes: but his hopes were completely extinguished when Walter Tyler announced with an official air, that he believed Major Clutterbuck was not likely to advance the thousand pounds if any design but that of Mr. Compo was adopted.

A few weeks afterwards, the quiet church-yard of St. Antholin's became a scene of noise and bustle. The remains of the old church were being carted away; scaffold-poles were being reared; bricklayers and masons were hard at work; and Mr. Compo, the admired of all beholders, and the envy of the builders at Snobbington, was superintending the progress of erecting what he called a church, and illustrating in his own person the fact, that the secret for success for an ecclesiastical architect in the nine-

teenth century is, to do all things upon a utilitarian model,—that is, *on the worst imaginable*.

It was absolutely necessary that the works at St. Antholin's should proceed with the greatest possible rapidity;—necessary, for Mr. Compo's fame, because if there was one thing more than another, (after his turrets, that is,) on which he prided himself, it was his despatch;—necessary for his pocket, for he had already pledged himself to build another church and two dissenting chapels before Christmas. There is certainly something very interesting in watching the progress of building, especially when that progress is perceptible from day to day, and is not interrupted by any of the thousand and one causes which the bricklayer usually finds for leaving his work for a fortnight at a time. Accordingly the scene of Mr. Compo's operations became quite a lounge to the idle part of the population of Tadbrook. Mrs. Clutterbuck and her daughters visited it almost daily. Our drunken friend Tapps would leave his last to the apprentice, and lie for hours on his back in the sun, watching the labourers at their toil, or lolling with his hands in his pockets against

a grave-stone, endeavouring to draw them into conversation, and make them as neglectful of their business as himself. Mr. Sanderson, too, thought it but right (much as he disliked the manner in which it was done) to shew by frequent attendance on the spot, the interest which he felt in the restoration of God's house : and even Miss Mildways, in spite of her age and infirmities, found her way, before the building was half completed, to what was now become quite a place of public resort.

It happened on the occasion to which we allude, that Mr. Sanderson and Mr. Compo had been standing together, talking earnestly, and had not immediately perceived her approach. Miss Mildways who was short-sighted, had been equally unconscious of their vicinity, till she was close upon them. She immediately drew back, and would fain have made her escape, for in very truth her feelings at that moment were of a kind which she shrunk from exposing to the rude scrutiny of strangers. All whom in this world she had loved the best were lying in that church-yard ; her venerable mother, her sweet sister, from whom she had been parted in early

youth,—her brother, who had not long since been taken from her, and who, from childhood to old age, had been her companion, her guide, and her own familiar friend. Yes ; they were lying side by side in their narrow beds ; but the smooth turf no longer sprung up above them,—the flowers she had planted no longer raised their lowly heads, or cast forth their fragrance ;—all were hidden from her gaze by heaps of bricks and lime-rubbish ; and labourers were wheeling their barrows over the remains of those who slept below. True, her reason told her it mattered little : in a few months the dew drops would again hang in pearls upon the velvet turf, and the flowers bloom as fresh and fair as heretofore. At any rate, what recked the faithful dead of these things ? Their bodies were buried in peace, and their souls were in safe keeping. She knew this ; and she felt that when she herself was laid beside them, she should be indifferent to such a trivial matter ;—but for *them*,—for those who had been dearer to her than life itself,—she could not endure the thought of anything like desecration,—and the tears trickled down her cheeks.

It was at this moment that she gained sight of Mr. Compo and his companion, and she instantly retreated,—but unluckily for her, not unobserved. Mr. Sanderson approached her first, and at once perceiving her agitation, and suspecting the cause, he would have said a word of kind greeting, and passed on. Not so Mr. Compo; he was too full of himself and his church, to think of any body else. First taking off his hat, and passing his fingers through his hair, he made a bow and a scrape, and then with a patronizing air held out a finger, which he intended Miss Mildways should shake, but which she, unconscious of the honour intended her, made no haste to accept.

“Vastly happy to see you, Me’m: shall be charmed to show you all we are doing, and all we propose to do.”

There was something so very insufferable in Mr. Compo’s manner, that it roused even Miss Mildways gentle spirit, and restored her directly to her wonted self-possession. She thanked him with perfect civility, but contrived withal to show that she intended to keep him at a distance; at least, it would have been

visible to anybody but Mr. Compo. But he, strong in sevenfold assurance, never seemed to doubt that it was his part to be condescending, or that his condescension could fail to be gratifying: so he rattled on.—“Dare say you hardly know where you are, Me’m; things have been so changed within the last six weeks. You are an old inhabitant of the parish, Me’m, no doubt—(at least, if it be possible that a lady can be an *old* inhabitant,) and I shouldn’t wonder if you were lost in surprise to find how things are being transmogrified: but we live in an age of changes, Me’m: the wisdom of our ancestors, and all those sort of things, are getting out of date; and while respectable people like yourself, Me’m, are wondering, the very changes themselves are changed. Now, if I might be so bold, I should like to know what the change *here* is, which strikes you most.”

“Oh, Sir,” said Miss Mildways, provoked even beyond *her* patience, “it is quite identical in kind with all the other changes of the present day. What I left *stone*, I find *stucco*.”

“Ha! ha! ha! very good,” cried Mr. Compo, with his wonted laugh of affectation, “very good.

‘What I left stone, I find stucco.’ Why, Me’m, you do me too much honour. You actually apply to me, what, if my classical recollections fail not, was the boast of one of the Roman Emperors with respect to the Imperial city herself: he found it stone, and left it stucco. Something of that kind wasn’t it, Mr. Sanderson? you are more conversant with the Mantuan bard than I am.”

“Not exactly, I think,” replied the Rector; who, as may be supposed, could hardly keep his countenance.

“May be so,” rejoined Mr. Compo; “but something of the kind was said, depend upon it. Oh! I remember; it was not stucco, but Roman cement. It was a remark, Me’m, which Heliogabalus made to Julius Cæsar, when he had finished the restoration of the Vatican. ‘Conscript Father,’ said he, ‘I found this building *stone*, and I leave it *Roman cement*.’ But to proceed with what I was saying, you find great changes here, Me’m; but if you’ll be kind enough to pay us a visit in a month’s time, I’ll undertake to say you’ll not accuse us of having been asleep. In old times it took half a century to build

a church: I'll build one in half a year, easy. We run up these things now-a-days, Me'm, in no time: don't let the grass grow under our feet. 'Keep moving,' is my motto; and we *do* keep moving.—Prodigious rapid, we are, surely," exclaimed Mr. Compo, with a prolonged enunciation of the last syllable, an ecstatic chuckle of self-satisfaction, and a vehement rubbing of his hands.

And Mr. Compo did himself no more than justice in thus describing the rapidity of his operations. In a month's time the progress made might certainly have astonished persons better acquainted with building details than Miss Mildways; though probably some apprehensions with respect to the stability of a fabric so erected, might have mingled with their astonishment. And as the autumn advanced, it was so evident that the church would be finished by Christmas, that Mrs. Clutterbuck was already busy in making plans for what she was pleased to term 'a grand opening.' It was not thought necessary that the new building should be re-consecrated, which was a disappointment to Mrs. Clutterbuck, who would have rejoiced in the *eclat* of an episcopal visit. But

as a bishop was not to be procured, she was resolved to do the best she could without one. She would have a grand opening, and a grand selection of sacred music, and a grand preacher, and the Duchess of Thetford. And all this the good lady had entirely settled and arranged in her own mind, before she communicated one word of her intentions to Mr. Sanderson. Having, however, so far matured her plans, as to have taken the printer's advice as to the size of the type to be used in the bills, with which all the dead walls in the neighbourhood were to be placarded, and likewise whether the preacher's name should be printed in red, blue, or green ink, she condescended to enlighten the Rector's mind, and accordingly opened her first battery with the Duchess of Thetford. "It was so essential," she said, "that there should be a good collection at the opening of the church, and people were so apt to follow the example of their superiors in rank; and the dear Duchess was so kind and generous, that if she could but get *her* to the opening, all the neighbourhood would follow, if it was only to get sight of her; and then the thing would be done."

Mr. Sanderson could not believe that people would be guilty of such irreverence as to come to church to look at a Duchess: if such a motive really was to influence the invitation, he had rather there should be no collection at all: but of course he had neither the wish nor the power to prevent any person coming to Tadbrook church who liked it.

The next step was to secure 'a taking selection of music.' For this purpose choristers and singing men were to be procured from —— Cathedral,—the rubric was to be set at defiance, and at every pause in the service, appropriate or inappropriate, chorusses, and 'favourite pieces,' as Mrs. Clutterbuck called them, were to be introduced.

All this Mr. Sanderson strenuously resisted; he had no objection on such an occasion (for indeed the re-opening of the church would be a day of special joy and thanksgiving) to increase the numbers of the choir, or do anything, in short, which might add to the solemnity of the occasion.—but as for turning the church into a concert-room, he stoutly declined it; if the thing was to be done at all, he must have the whole direction of it. "And after all, my dear

Madam," said he, smiling, "since the sermon is to be that which is to extract the money out of people's pockets, you really ought to have some consideration for me. One of my plain sermons, after your flourish of trumpets, would be quite out of place. I should be quite shy of preaching under such circumstances."

"Sir!—preach!—*you!*" exclaimed Mrs. Clutterbuck in amazement: "Why who ever dream't of *your* preaching on such an occasion?"

"Am I an improper person to preach at the opening of my own church?"

"Clearly, Sir, clearly: the most improper in the world. Such a thing never was heard of;—cannot be thought of for a moment."

Mr. Sanderson was, as we have already said, a young man, and therefore felt that he had much to learn,—so he modestly asked, "Why?"

"Why?—my good Sir, for a hundred reasons; but one will suffice:—people can hear you at Tadbrook any day; now what we must have is somebody who can *not* be heard every day,—a popular preacher from a distance. People wont come to church without an attraction of that sort you may rely on it."

“I am sorry to hear it, Madam. In what light can the people you speak of look on the prayers?”

“In the same light that everybody else does, I suppose,” answered Mrs. Clutterbuck hastily; “as a very proper prelude to the sermon.”

“The sermon being, of course, the *chief* attraction,” said Mr. Sanderson very gravely.

Mrs. Clutterbuck blushed and was silent; for she saw that although she had only put into words, what, it is to be feared, a great many people think, she had got into a position that was untenable.—In a few moments she changed her ground. “Of course, my dear Sir, I can have but one motive in any suggestion that I make,—the welfare of the church and people of Tadbrook. There is a heavy expense to be met,—there is no way so effectual of securing a large collection, as calling in the aid of some eloquent man, who would powerfully work on the feelings of his auditors, and stir them up to shew the spirit of Christian liberality.”

There was just emphasis enough on the word *eloquent*, to convince Mr. Sanderson that he did not, in the opinion of Mrs. Clutterbuck, possess that qua-

lity: and yet the suggestion (with such true woman's wit was it administered) seemed rather to come from his own mind than from the lady's lips.

"Well, Madam," said the Rector, who, besides his own natural modesty, had great unwillingness to thwart any scheme which might benefit his church, "what course do you propose?"

"Have you the privilege of knowing Mr. Bellamour,—the Rev. Lorenzo Bellamour?"

"One of the clergy at ——?" asked Mr. Sanderson, naming a fashionable inland watering-place.

"Yes; the incumbent of St. Mary's."

"I was introduced to him at Snobbington last summer. He was travelling about the country to make speeches for the —— Society; and he happened to call at Mr. Prynne's while I was there."

"Didn't you think him very handsome?"

"Indeed, I never thought about it."

"Ah! you men are so unobservant."

"Well,—but I remember Mr. Bellamour perfectly,—very pink and white, and a profusion of black hair. No, I should not call him handsome."

Mrs. Clutterbuck thought the Rector envious,—

so she forbore further comment on Mr. Bellamour's personal appearance. "Well, you may think what you will of his exterior,—but he is very charming, quite a lady's man."

"Yes, yes," replied Mr. Sanderson laughing, "nobody has so much love made to them as popular preachers."

"Envious again," thought Mrs. Clutterbuck. "Well, but seriously," continued she aloud, "there is nobody so much admired in the pulpit as Mr. Bellamour, and as I know him very well, I really think I might prevail upon him to preach our sermon."

"Well, but seriously," replied Mr. Sanderson, repeating the lady's words, "how can I tell whether, if I surrender my pulpit to him, he may not preach doctrines diametrically opposite to those which I should inculcate myself? Such things have happened before now."

"Oh, I will engage for that," answered Mrs. Clutterbuck eagerly: and as she was one of those persons who have no notion of not carrying their point, she plied Mr. Sanderson with so many argu-

ments, and so completely *out-talked* him, that in course of time he yielded nearly everything for which the lady had contended.

And now the all important day approached, and Mrs. Clutterbuck's spirits were in such a state of excitement, that when the last scaffold pole was removed, and Mr. Compo's frightful pile stood forth in all its complicated ugliness, she had nothing for it but to burst into a flood of tears. Her joy and admiration were all but complete. Mr. Bellamour in the pulpit, and she would have nothing more to hope or fear.

Saturday came;—the next day was to be *the* opening. Saturday came, and by ten o'clock in the morning Mrs. Clutterbuck was at the church. The plaister was still very damp; the air in the building felt anything but dry,—and there was a most oppressive smell from the lately varnished pews.—But Mrs. Clutterbuck consoled herself in the thought that the weather was so fine and frosty that nobody was likely to take cold, and as for the smell of the varnish, a good fire kept up in the pa-

tent stove—(Stynx and Kindlefintz' stove), for the next four and twenty hours would entirely get rid of that: so she had a fire lighted and returned home again to be present at a rehearsal of the music which was to be performed next morning, and to order some calves-foot jelly,—as Mr. Bellamour, always ate calves-foot jelly in the vestry before he preached a charity sermon,—it made his voice softer, he said.

But Mrs. Clutterbuck was (to use a common phrase) in much too great a fidget to stay quiet at home when she had got there; so having remembered that the pulpit hangings and altar cloth had not been taken to the church, thither once more she sallied in the teeth of a high wind, and sharp biting frost, to judge of their effect;—no unnecessary step, as she had caused them to be made of 'the family colours,' to wit, green and yellow. In other words, Mrs. Clutterbuck had put the pulpit and communion table *into the Clutterbuck livery*.* Arrived at the

* Lest the reader should think this a mere story-teller's exaggeration, and that no squire of the parish, or squire's lady, would really be guilty of such irreverence, the writer begs to say that he quotes a *fact*: and, were he so disposed, he could bring forward a still more melancholy instance of irreverence, committed in a similar manner. The display of the squire's taste, and his arbitrary interference with respect to the fabric and ornaments of the Church, in many of our rural parishes, has often been most mischievous.

church, she found the fire out, and only a smell of smoke to shew that one had ever been : the old woman whose office it was to sweep the church, and attend to the fire was gone home, and she knew not where to find her. So she resolved to walk across the churchyard, and ask Mrs. Tapps, (with whom as the reader knows she was well acquainted) to have the fire properly lighted, and kept up till night.

But Mrs. Tapps was not at home. Mrs. Clutterbuck after knocking at the door once or twice, was saluted with an oath and an invitation to come in : and while she was hesitating whether or no she should enter, the door was opened and the shoemaker himself stood before her.

“Ah, my darling,” said he, “what do you want? a pair of shoes my pretty one, I reckon. Well, I’m the man to fit you.”

Mrs. Clutterbuck was so frightened, (for the man had evidently been drinking,) that she could not answer at first.

“Beg pardon a thousand times, Madam Clutterbuck ; as I’m alive, didn’t know you, Ma’am ; hope you’ll excuse it. Can I serve you, Ma’am, in any

thing?" asked Tapps, sobered by the surprise of so unexpected a visit.

"Thank you, I wanted to ask your wife to look after the fire in the church."

"Yes, Ma'am : but Poll (that's my wife) is gone out for the day to Miss Mildways, to see our girl Lucy, that lived with you."

"Oh then, perhaps you'll be kind enough to allow your servant, or your apprentice to do it."

"Shall have the greatest happiness in life in doing it myself Ma'am."

"No, no I won't trouble *you*, but just give your apprentice this," said Mrs. Clutterbuck feeling for her purse, "for his trouble, and bid him be very careful to keep up a good fire."

Mrs. Clutterbuck looked in her purse,—but there was nothing but a sovereign, and a five shilling piece. She was much too anxious to escape from Tapps to ask for change, so she slipped the crown into his hands, and retreated.

"Well, was ever the like of this seen? Why the lady must be out of her senses! Five shillings to our Jack for lighting a fire! No, no if *she* don't

know the value of money *I* do, I can tell her. I'll go drink her health, and success to the new church with it,—and Jack shall light the fire for less than five shillings I'll warrant. Here, Jack,—Jack; you little ugly monkey," (hitting him a knock on the head) "why don't you come when you are called? Go you into the church, and light a precious good fire there, and put on as many coals as you can every half hour till I come back again: and if I don't find the place warm, and fit for a gentleman, I'll break every bone in your skin,—I will, you young jackanapes." And another blow fell upon Jack's head.

Having made this arrangement, Tapps went with all possible speed to the Leg of Mutton; and Jack, with the fear of broken bones before his eyes, repairing to the church, and though a good deal puzzled at the construction of the Stynx and Kindlefintz stove, contrived before he quitted it to light a very sufficient fire.

After spending a good portion of the day at the ale-house, Tapps himself returned towards evening, "rather overtaken," as *he* would have described it,

—very drunk in the opinion of the landlord of the Leg of Mutton. Not forgetful, however, of the injunctions of his unconscious benefactress, he staggered into the church, and having put as well as he could, plenty more coals on the fire, he locked the door, took the key with him, and going home tumbled into bed with his clothes on to sleep off the fumes of liquor.

It was about two hours afterwards,—that is to say, about eight o'clock in the evening, that Mrs. Tapps returning from a happy visit to her daughter, (now recovered, and living in Miss Mildways' service) observed as she approached her own dwelling a strong light in the church: at first she thought it must be some of the work people finishing their preparations for the next morning, but then it occurred to her that there was a greater illumination, than twenty candles would have afforded, and at almost the same instant she observed a shower of sparks.

She ran to the door: it was locked: listened, and heard a roaring and crackling;—(that sound which once heard can never be forgotten!) certainly

the church must be on fire. With some difficulty, she climbed up to one of the windows, and saw that part of the gallery nearest to the stove in flames,—and as she looked, observed the fire running along the newly varnished woodwork, with the rapidity of lightning. She flew home to give the alarm; but could get no admittance: her husband was asleep, and Jack had availed himself of the opportunity to go and see his friends in the village.

In an agony of dismay, Mary Tapps ran to the nearest houses, and gave an alarm. Some hastened to Tadbrook House for the fire engine,—some rushed to the pool with buckets, forgetting in their hurry that the ice was four inches thick. The majority hastened to the churchyard, but they were only in time to see that the new building was one mass of flame from end to end,—and to stand by for one short half hour, when both nave and tower having yielded to the devouring element, came tumbling down, galleries, turrets, and all, and the lurid glare which had been shed over hill and vale, and alarmed the country for miles around, sunk down at once, and a heap of glowing ashes was

nearly all that remained of Mr. Compo's unsubstantial edifice.

The roar of the flames having subsided, there was heard the cries of some one in excessive pain, and then it was discovered that Bill Tapps, the author of all the mischief, having been awakened from his drunken sleep by the shouts of the people, the suffocating smoke, and the light of the conflagration, had been seized with the impression that his own house was in flames,—that instead of running down stairs, he had thrown open the window and precipitated himself from it, and was now lying on the ground below with both his thighs broken.

CHAPTER VII.

THE SAME WORK TO BE DONE, BUT ANOTHER
WAY OF DOING IT.

IF we are to judge by the materials of which they are composed, and the manner of their construction, there must be very few of the new churches which can have been intended by their builders to last beyond the present century. Clearly, however, it is better to have *any* kind of churches than *none*: clearly it is our duty to provide for the spiritual wants of our teeming population as speedily and as extensively as possible: it is good in the present distress, with Chartism and Socialism, and their kindred abominations, assaulting us on every side, to avail ourselves of whatever weapon of proof may

first come to hand, and be easiest wielded. The masses of our manufacturing population must, in a very few years, become entirely heathen, unless the present generation erect a sufficient number of churches for their accommodation. And it is no easy matter to teach the careless and the self-indulgent that they must individually forego many luxuries, before such an object can be attained. We neither undervalue, nor fail to appreciate the exertions that have been so zealously made in many quarters;—we say, sincerely and heartily, that we would rather have cheap churches (erected and arranged after primitive models) in profusion,* than costly and few. But we believe that (generally speaking) there is no need why we should be driven to such a choice: we believe that private selfishness is the only cause why we have so many cheap churches,—that “the one ever-exhausting, unceas-

* It is no doubt upon this principle that one at least, of our Diocesan Church Building Societies refuses its aid towards the erection of any church the estimated cost of which exceeds £2 per sitting. One can only hope that such a regulation will stimulate individual liberality to make *any* sacrifice rather than build churches at such a rate.

ing call, which dries up and drains off all our charities, is *self*, in some changing form of luxury: we believe that whenever a bolder tone is assumed by the clergy on the subject of Christian liberality, the results will speedily be seen: we believe that when they “enforce,” *sufficiently*, “on the rich, the condition upon which they hold their riches,”—when they “claim those full offerings with which the Church ought to equalize the inequalities of poverty and wealth,” their call will be answered: we believe that we have only to ask largely, and we shall receive largely. Small alms are the consequence, not of individual poverty, but of active charity and self-denial not enforced.

If these opinions be correct, it is to be hoped that a different system will be pursued hereafter, and the permanent interests of posterity will be as much considered in the erection of our churches as those of the present age. Meanwhile, may our modern churches, cheap and unsightly as they be, be blessed to abundant usefulness, and may the praiseworthy exertions of their pious founders meet their due reward! And since the edifices themselves

have unhappily, for the most part, as few claims to durability as to beauty, let us hope that as they sink into decay, a more devout, more ungrudging, more self-denying age than our own, will restore them to that honour and excellence which it is meet that God's houses should possess : let us hope that those who come after us, warned by our errors, will not be slow to give to God of His own, and escape the covetousness and indifferentism into which we have fallen !

But to return more immediately to the subject which raised these reflections. If the generality of modern churches be destined to early decay, those of our friend Mr. Compo's building might be said to be tending to ruin from the moment of their completion, so regularly did settlements, or dry-rot, or some similar results of defective materials, unseasoned timbers, and injudicious haste, exhibit themselves in the course of a very few years, in the economical structures of the cheapest of architects: and, therefore, the catastrophe recorded in the last chapter, only anticipated what the revolutions of not many seasons would have inevitably brought about.

Still, as may be supposed, the event was not the less dismal to the rate-payers of Tadbroom, when they found themselves in debt to the amount of a thousand pounds and upwards, and with nothing to shew for their money but some smoking ruins. If Bill Tapps had broken his neck before he had set the church on fire, he would have had much more sympathy than he got for breaking his thighs after it. As it was, the public spoke of him very much as he deserved.

On the Monday morning following the fire, the two Churchwardens of Tadbroom had been surveying the scene of devastation, with the view of ascertaining whether any part of the new-built walls might be rendered available for any future building; but this was soon seen to be out of the question. The only portions which remained standing were in such a dangerous condition, that they were liable to fall at any moment. Certainly the parishioners and churchwardens of Tadbroom were the most unlucky, the most undeservedly unlucky, people on the face of the earth,—so thought Walter Tyler; and so he told William Andrewes. But William re-

mained silent; for he felt that their sin had been made (as it always is) their punishment. If they had done their duty by the old church, it would have been standing still: if the new church had been properly built, and properly attended to, no such accident as that which had recently happened would have occurred. They had erred grievously, even on their own low, mercenary system. They had been ‘penny wise and pound foolish;’ and now were reaping the consequences of their covetousness.

However, William did not see any good in irritating his brother churchwarden by pressing home-truths at that moment, and as we have said, he remained silent. Mr. Tyler was silent too, for he was very busy commiserating himself; and so they stood, poking the embers with their sticks, and chewing the cud of fancies which were more bitter than sweet.

At that moment, they heard the sharp rattle of a carriage on the road, and looking round saw Miss Mildways in her pony chaise; she was bringing Lucy Tapps to see her father.

“I wonder how the old lady can demean herself

so, as to go and see that drunken vagabond. I do believe that half the mischief that is done in the world is done by your charitable ladies."

Andrewes laughed at this little ebullition of spleen, and pointed out Lucy Tapps, observing at the same time, that certainly Miss Mildways had done no mischief in effecting her cure,—for she was as good a girl as any in the country.

"Oh, I don't mean to say any thing against Miss Mildways, for I know you're a great admirer of her's, William: she is a fine charitable old lady, only like most of her sex rather capricious,—at least in her charity."

"Why do you say that, Wat?"

"Because although she is rolling in wealth, she only gave us twenty-five pounds for our church,—and I know she gave a hundred to that at Factory Green."

"Why to my certain knowledge she offered fifty pounds."

"Yes, upon conditions," replied Tyler.

"And very proper conditions too;—our not having that bazaar to encourage people in vanity

and worldliness, and to give nothing in charity without bargaining for an equivalent."

Walter Tyler did not understand this last sentence; so he remained silent. William Andrewes proceeded: "As for the donation to the church at Factory Green, she told me when she sent me with it, that her reason for sending so large a sum was that it was a very poor place, and the rich manufacturers were all Dissenters. But I wonder what makes you think she is rolling in wealth."

"I always heard she had something of her own: and to be sure her brother left her all he had. And then see what a deal she gives away. Oh, she must be very rich."

"Nay, for matter of that," replied William Andrewes, "I suspect her *known* charities, are but the tithe of those that are unknown. What do you take her income to be, Tyler?"

"Oh, thousands: a couple of thousand at least."

"No, Wat: not half that. I happen to know exactly, for the old lady let it out one day. She has just eight hundred a year."

"Well, you quite surprise me; she makes it go a great way."

“Yes, because she spends nothing on herself, and denies herself many a comfort, that people twenty years her juniors would think indispensable.”

The conversation was here interrupted, for Miss Mildways herself was seen issuing from the house, and instead of getting into her carriage, entered the churchyard, apparently for the purpose of viewing the scene of devastation. The two churchwardens went down the walk to meet her.

“How do you find the unluckily author of all this mischief, Madam?” asked Walter Tyler after the usual salutations.

“I have not seen him,” replied Miss Mildways, “for the doctors have ordered him to be kept perfectly quiet: but I understand from his wife, that the doctors think ill of him. His previous habits have quite undermined his constitution.”

“It will be a great blessing for his wife if he dies: he is a good for nothing vagabond.”

“I am afraid so,” said Miss Mildways, “and therefore we should pray that he may have time allowed him to repent, and obtain mercy from God. It would be an awful thing indeed, were he to leave the world in his present condition.”

“Very true, Madam,” answered Walter, who in his heart was a good natured man,—“I spoke hastily, but it is not easy to be in charity with a man who has caused such a deplorable misfortune as this.”

There was something in the expression of Miss Mildways’ countenance as he uttered these words, which puzzled Walter Tyler extremely. Her looks said as clearly as looks could speak that she saw nothing whatever that was deplorable.

But her words contradicted her looks. “Certainly it is very deplorable to have all one’s trouble for nothing, and that I fear is my poor friend Mrs. Clutterbuck’s case: and two new churches in the course of one year, will be a deplorable tax out of the rate-payers’ pockets. What a pity it is they didn’t think it worth their while to keep the old church from tumbling down. *That* was the most deplorable.”

Walter Tyler looked black as night, but he had not a word to say in reply.

“But, I am not going to dwell on the past,” continued Miss Mildways. “What I came here to

say, gentlemen, was this. I offered *fifty* pounds for the last church, if you had no bazaar, because I disapprove bazaars. You had the bazaar, and so I only gave you five and twenty;—well, as this new catastrophe has happened, I am ready to give you another five and twenty without conditions,——whenever you think fit to apply for it.” And Miss Mildways turned on her heel, and without waiting for thanks proceeded as rapidly as she could to her carriage.

“Five and twenty!” exclaimed Wat Tyler, as soon as she was out of hearing, “what a beggarly, miserly, niggardly, poor, mean, close, contemptible old woman! Why can’t she come down handsome?”

“It’s not so much as I expected certainly,” said William Andrewes, “but half a loaf is better than no bread.”

“Well, there’s no good in our standing kicking our heels here all day,” observed Walter Tyler, in manifest ill humour. “What’s to be done next?”

“I can’t think,” answered his brother churchwarden, “but I suppose I had better go up again to the Rectory.”

"Have you been there already?"

"Oh yes, and waited there for two hours;—Mr. Sanderson has been all morning up at Hazelbank with Miss Mildways, but, of course, as she has just been here, he must have returned home again."

"We know already all that he can tell us; he has screwed a paltry five and twenty pounds out of her. I'm sure I shan't go half-a-mile out of my road to be told that."

"Well, will you meet me there at eleven o'clock to-morrow?"

"At eleven be it then," answered Walter Tyler.

And so they parted. But the event shewed that they had 'reckoned without their host,' as the saying is; for each on his return home found a note from Mr. Sanderson, informing them that he was obliged to go out on business the next day, but requesting their attendance at the Rectory on the Thursday following, for the purpose of meeting Archdeacon Sharpe.

"I wish that Archdeacon was at Jericho," exclaimed Walter Tyler, as he crushed the note with his hand, and threw it into the fire. "Its all owing to him, and that poor fool Oliver Ouzel."

“Not quite all, is it, Walter?” asked Conscience. Walter winced impatiently, and got rid of the subject by scolding his wife, for making the room too hot.

Punctual to the appointed hour, the Churchwardens appeared at the Rectory, and were admitted into Mr. Sanderson's study, where in addition to the Rector himself, they found the Archdeacon, and Robert Spellman. All three were laughing heartily when Walter Tyler and his colleague entered. The laugh ceased, but it was evident that the party was in very high spirits. There was something so provoking in this, that Walter Tyler was disposed to quarrel with all of them immediately. However, the cause of Robert Spellman's satisfaction was soon made known, for upon his preparing to leave the room, on the entrance of the Churchwardens, Mr. Sanderson stopped him till he had formerly announced to them, that he and the other trustees had that morning elected the old schoolmaster warden of St. Antholin's Hospital,—a sort of superior alms'-house of very ancient foundation, where the worthy man would pass the evening of his days, in well earned repose and decent competency.

“And now,” said Mr. Sanderson, trying to look very grave, “we must consult on the disaster which has befallen Mr. Compo’s church.”

“The disaster which has befallen Mr. Compo’s church ! such a way of expressing himself !” thought Churchwarden Tyler ; “just as if it was no disaster at all, and as if it was not *our* church, rather than Mr. Compo’s.”—And Walter’s countenance grew darker, as he saw an expression about the corners of the Archdeacon’s mouth, which at once puzzled him, and suggested thoughts of further mischief.

“Pray gentlemen,” said Dr. Sharpe, “what steps are you taking about the rebuilding of the church ?”

“Indeed, Sir, I am quite at a loss to devise what is to be done,” replied William Andrewes.

“I can’t imagine how we shall get out of this fresh difficulty,” rejoined Walter Tyler.

“What a pity you had so many inflammable materials,” said the Archdeacon.

“Terrible expense ; we shall be ruined,” groaned forth the disconsolate Walter.

“No doubt, no doubt,” continued the Archdeacon,—“what is too cheap for a church, may nevertheless be too dear for a bonfire.”

Even William Andrewes stared at this speech, for he thought it very unfeeling: but he said nothing, and Dr. Sharpe proceeded.—“It is my duty, you know, gentlemen, to see that the parishioners of Tadbrook are not kept without a place of worship longer than can be avoided. Therefore, not an hour should be lost in making the necessary arrangements. Have you any hope of getting assistance in the way of subscriptions?”

“Miss Mildways has offered us five and twenty pounds: but that,” continued Walter with a shrug, “won’t rebuild a church.”

“No,” said the Archdeacon; and down went the corners of his mouth.

“No,” responded Mr. Sanderson with a sigh, intently regarding a fly on the ceiling.

“Have you had no further contributions?” asked Dr. Sharpe.

No, Sir,” replied William Andrewes; “only the Reverend Lorenzo Bellamour sent us”

“What?” asked Walter Tyler, interrupting him eagerly.

“*His best wishes*,” replied his colleague.

“Well, really, gentlemen, something must be done. Won’t Mrs. Clutterbuck set up another bazaar?”

“I had thought of that already Sir,” replied Mr. Tyler, “but on inquiry, I find that her hands are full. She has engaged with some other charitable ladies who take an interest in the poor Africans, to provide funds for founding a professorship of Political Economy at Tombuctoo. So we must not hope for her assistance at present, in matters near home.”

“Do you think we could secure the valuable aid of Signior Salamandro?” said Mr. Sanderson very demurely to William Andrewes,

Walter Tyler to whom the question was *not* addressed, grew very red in the face, and would probably have given an angry answer; but William Andrews anticipated him. He hardly knew what to make of such bantering. But he was full of good humour, and replied, “Ah, Sir, I fear we are too late: the poor Signior has gone further than even

to Ispahan ;—for I understand that having put the red hot poker into a barrel of gunpowder, 499 times with perfect success, the five hundreth experiment failed : the powder went off, and so did the roof of the house, and the Signior himself; and dead or alive he has never been heard of since.”

“ Very unlucky, indeed,” said the Archdeacon ; “ fortune seems to have a spite against St. Antholin’s. Well, you must consult Mr. Compo again, I suppose.”

“ I wish we could, with all my heart,” replied Walter Tyler with a sigh ; “ but I heard this morning that he was going out directly to Botany Bay,—to Australia.”

“ Voluntarily or involuntarily ?” asked Mr. Sanderson, who certainly had no very charitable feelings towards the last architect of St. Antholin’s.

“ He is going out,” continued Walter Tyler, without answering the enquiry, “ to build a palace for Judge Greenacre. He is to have his expences paid out, and home, and to have a handsome annuity settled on him besides.”

“ I trust with all my heart,” said the Archdeacon, “ that he will not come back again.”

"No," observed Mr. Sanderson, "he cannot do better than stay there. I cannot conceive an employment more exactly suited to his taste and capacity than that of erecting lath and plaister palaces for prosperous expatriated pickpockets."

"Well, gentlemen," said Dr. Sharpe,—for he observed that Walter Tyler was getting very angry, "you must forgive Mr. Sanderson and myself for keeping you so long in suspense, when we have something extremely pleasing to impart to you. It seems you are quite at a loss to devise any plan for raising funds towards the rebuilding of your church. I am thankful to say that I believe the difficulty is obviated. Gentlemen," he continued, "I have good news for you,—so good that you will hardly believe it. And I must take leave to say that such a piece of fortune is wholly undeserved by the parishioners of Tadbrook. I have to inform you that no less a sum than six thousand pounds has been placed at the disposal of Mr. Sanderson and myself, upon certain conditions, for the rebuilding of St. Antholin's."

"Six thousand pounds!" exclaimed the Church-

wardens, in a breath. "Six thousand pounds, Sir! Is it possible?"

"Not only possible, but certain," replied Mr. Sanderson; "and further; if more than six thousand pounds should be required, more than six thousand will be forthcoming."

"Who in the world can have made such a magnificent present," cried Walter Tyler, his ears tingling with delight. "May I guess?"

"Yes, if you please," said Mr. Sanderson, "but if you guess till Doom's-day, you will never learn from me whether you are right or wrong. The person in question desires to remain wholly unknown. The only point I feel myself at liberty to mention, (and I do it by way of exciting others to similar acts of Christian liberality) is, that the person who makes so noble an offering to God, and His Church, is only enabled to do so by sacrificing a considerable portion of their whole fortune, and that when I felt inclined to suggest that a smaller sum would suffice, I was met by the answer, 'I will not offer unto God, of that which costs me nothing.'"

"Never heard any thing so handsome in my

life," cried Walter Tyler, "but do you really mean, Sir, that you will not give us the slightest clue to discover our unknown benefactor?"

"I have solemnly promised her that I will never do so : and it is a promise I shall keep."

"*Her!*" the monosyllable escaped unsuspected from Mr. Sanderson's lips, and unnoticed by Walter Tyler. William Andrewes heard it, marked it, and drew his own conclusions, but from that moment he never was known to allude to the subject. He was in all his feelings a gentleman, and a Christian.

"But the conditions,—did you not say, Sir, it was given upon conditions?"

"Yes," replied the Archdeacon, "and the conditions are these, that the church be in all points save one a fac-simile of that which was blown down."

"We could not have a better model certainly," observed William Andrewes, "but what is to be the single point of difference in the new edifice."

"*There are to be no pews,*" replied Dr. Sharpe, "upon that point every thing depends, for unless this stipulation be agreed to, I have no promise of the grant."

Walter Tyler's face rather lengthened at this, and he exclaimed, "What in the world, will Mrs. Clutterbuck say? Her pew was the grandest thing in Mr. Compo's church, and nearly the grandest in the old one."

"Leave Mrs. Clutterbuck to me," answered the Rector, "her feelings on this matter however erroneous, are rather, I will undertake to say, the result of habit, than of pride and self-sufficiency. She has read her Bible too long and too well not to know that we are all equal in God's house, and she has too kind a heart not to be glad to make any sacrifices—(when the matter is fairly set before her) for her poorer neighbours. No, Mrs. Clutterbuck will not be the person who will give us any trouble."

Mr. Sanderson judged rightly of Mrs. Clutterbuck. *She* yielded the point like a Christian, but not so all:—Mrs. Spatterdash, the widow of the Snobbington sadler, having stood out valiantly for her rights and privileges, tailed off at last to a dissenting chapel, there to preserve her dignity unsullied by submission to an open sitting.

"It is a most munificent act, certainly," observ-

ed Walter Tyler, after a minute's consideration," and no doubt it will take a large sum to build up such a church as the old one : but six thousand pounds seems almost above the mark ; don't you think, Sir, that our benefactor would consent to hand over a thousand pounds or so, to pay for Mr. Compo's church, and ease the parish from such a heavy burden of debt?"

"No Sir," said the Archdeacon with a tone of sternness and severity so unlike his usual manner that it made his companion start. "No Sir," he repeated with increased vehemence, "for such a purpose, the person in question will not give one farthing, and were they disposed to do, I can assure you, that my most earnest remonstrances should not be wanting to dissuade them from it. No Sir, though I do not wish to pain you, it is fit you should see this matter as the rest of the world sees it. If the parishioners of Tadbroom, are in debt and difficulties, they have no one to blame for it but themselves. They chose to follow the fashion of the times in leaving God's House to decay and ruin, — they grudged all necessary repairs, and when they saw their church

in ruins, they set about rebuilding it in so mean and parsimonious a spirit, that even if that wretched pile had not been burnt down, it would have fallen of itself in a very few years. So fully aware was your unknown benefactor of this, that that person had provided by will for the future rebuilding of your church on the old model, so soon as Mr. Compo's edifice had become dangerous. So that the conflagration only hastened the execution of a long formed plan. But that person had seen with too deep indignation your treatment of the ancient fabric to intrust you with the erection of a new one, and, moreover, is resolved to leave you to get out of debt as you can. You will have a new church, by that person's bounty ; but it is right for the sake of other parishes, that you should learn by practical experience the evils of the system you have chosen to follow. To help you further would be to offer a premium on carelessness and covetousness."

Thus ended the conversation between the Archdeacon, the Rector, and his Churchwardens,—and it was a conversation which in its different ways may be studied with advantage by many others elsewhere.

No sooner had spring set in, than the churchyard of Tadbrook was once more filled with labourers, and ere autumn closed the well remembered form of the ancient church was seen rising up once more in all its pristine stability and beauty. Neither pains nor cost have been spared in its erection, and now that it is nearly finished, and its beautiful carvings in wood and stone, —its storied windows bright with gorgeous hues,—its massive Altar, and canopied Font are brought in one view, under the spectator's eye, he feels that he has seen for once what a church ought to be, and if he be a true son of the Church he prays that such once more may be all the churches in the land, meet habitations (so far as human means admit) for the presence of Him who hath promised not to disdain an earthly tabernacle,—meet temples for an united people, worshipping in spirit and in truth.

And who was it after all, that reared this noble pile, who, that set such an example of Christian bounty,—and of the true method of Christian alms-doing,—silent, secret, undetected by the world,—who, that let not their left hand know what their right hand was doing?

We have our own opinion: we leave each reader to form one for himself. It is a matter of no consequence. But that which is really a matter of consequence is this, that we ask ourselves how far *we* are habitually acting in the same spirit,—how far—amid ten thousand temptations in the present day to forget it,—we remember, that the good deed done in secret is that which is most acceptable to God,—how far we rest contented in the promise that He Who seeth in secret shall Himself reward us openly.



THE END.

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